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A DISSERTATION

on the CHARACTERS and SOUNDS of the CHINESE LANGUAGE:

INCLUDING

TABLES of the ELEMENTARY CHARACTERS,

And of the CHINESE MONOSYLLABLES.

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CONTENTS OF THE DISSERTATION.

INTRODUCTION—REMARKS on the CHARACTERS—The elements in making the Chinese words—Specific difference between the Chinese and other languages; the former the Symbolic medium, the latter the Imitative.—Harris's opinion—the imitative medium not explored—adopted by one third of mankind—ELEMENTARY CHARACTERS, two kinded and fourfold——A Synopsis of them—compose all the Chinese characters;—on the weight of them—what objects they represent—height of perception in which each class is used;—Comparison between the Symbolic and Imitative modes—The English language equally skilful of acquisition—of retention—the mere reading of a language nothing—Elementary characters more advantageous than an Alphabet in gaining a further acquaintance with the language—assist in meditating and writing the other characters.—Of tracing the component parts of a character. COMPOUND CHARACTERS—first class—second class, containing those formed by two elements—third class, those formed by three—fourth class, those formed by four—and above that number.

REMARKS on the SOUNDS (VOICE) formed on the syllabic plan.—LITERAL Powers of the Chinese words—consist of nine series—comparable with the Sanskrit alphabet—how compared—in what manner each series is formed.—Affinity between the Chinese Series and some other Indian Alphabets—Siamese—Burman—Tibet,—FIGURAL powers of the Chinese sounds—Open Pe-

mary Tones—Court Primary or Derivative Tones—Open primary Tones with their Secondary ones—Close or Dentative, with their Secondary ones—Four Tables containing the Chinese monosyllables—number of monosyllables in the Chinese language (1,5).—The Four Intonations affixed to the Chinese words—increase the monosyllables to 4,256—Conjectures on their origin—The final modifications of the monosyllables, increasing them to above 400—The Mandarin or Court language—Provincial Variations.

REMARKS on the GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION of the language (24) Substantives—number—gender—case—prepositive characters forming the cases—Adjectives.—Pronouns—personal—relative—demonstrative—interrogative.—Verbs (Tenses)—mode—tense—number and person—The substantive verb to be—Auxiliaries, &c.

Of the CHINESE DICTIONARIES—their antiquity—Imperial Dictionary.—Of the number of the Chinese characters—Conjecture as the number with that of Greek, Latin and English words. Conclusion.

DISSERTATION

ON THE

CHINESE LANGUAGE.

THE Chinese language has been long a subject of speculation in the literary world. Indeed the circumstance of its being a language carefully cultivated, and anxiously preserved from every foreign mixture, by one of the most ancient and populous nations on earth, would, independently of other circumstances, naturally render it an object of attention. But when to this is added its extraordinary nature, as being formed without an alphabet, and yet containing so great a number of characters that life of man is said to be scarcely sufficient for the acquisition of them all, it is not surprising that this language should be regarded as a *non-descript* in the philological world, unique in its kind, and almost impracticable in its nature.

Nor have the reports which have been made on this language entirely removed that obscurity which has so long hung over it: on the contrary, the information communicated has borne a stronger resemblance to a sudden but transient flash of light, which, darting on some large and undivided object, serves merely to disclose its size without conveying any distinct idea of its shape, than to that calm and steady light, which, giving us an opportunity of contemplating an object at leisure, enables us to form a just idea of its proportion, and finds

as to the discovery of its nature and qualities. It has, among other things, been said, "That the number of the Chinese characters is augmented beyond all bounds;"* "that one word sometimes corresponds to three or four thousand characters"—and, "That letter sciences are often composed in China, which, if you attend to the characters, their import is pure and sublime; but if you regard the sense only, they contain a meaning ludicrous and obscene."† Such reports as these, though they may be partially true, serve only to bewilder the mind, and leave it in a state of wild amusement.

It is, however, far from being my intention to intimate, that to communicate such a degree of light as shall fully elucidate this language, is at present within my power: such a work will be much more rationally expected as the effect of the united labours of many. It will, notwithstanding, be obvious, that efforts have not been made for communicating such information as may be obtained, this effort can never be produced; and that, to lay before the public, in a candid and unassuming manner, whatever ideas on this subject, a person may have an opportunity of acquiring, is the indispensible duty of every one who feels interested in the advancement of general knowledge, and the consequent happiness of mankind.* This will, I trust, form a sufficient reason for my thus attempting to communicate such ideas relative to this language, as have arisen in my mind in the course of nearly four years' study; and, with the candid and liberal, be esteemed a sufficient apology for every imperfection they may discover in this work.

That the Chinese is a singular language, will be readily acknowledged. But although it differs widely in its principle from every alphabetic language, I am persuaded that a cool and thorough investigation of the subject, will remove

* See Encyclopædia Britannica, article China.

† See Preface and Note as quoted by Dr. Hager, in his Explanation of the Chinese Elementary Characters, p. xv.

every of the mistaken ideas hitherto entertained respecting it, and perhaps evince, that though totally different in its nature, it is little less regular in its formation, and, [were the means of acquiring it equally within our power,] scarcely more difficult of acquisition than the Sanskrit, the Greek, or even the Latin language.

What may be further offered on the subject, naturally divides itself into Remarks on the CHARACTERS,—on the SOUNDS, or the PRONUNCIATION,—and on the GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION of the Language.

REMARKS ON THE CHARACTERS.

The CHARACTERS of the Chinese Language demand our first attention, as they form not only the basis, but the essence and substance of a language which speaks to the eye rather than to the ear; and which, though rich and copious in a high degree, if we regard the Characters, is poor beyond any other language, if we merely regard its connected Sounds. The former might indeed, without any degree of violence, be separated from the latter, and clothed in the variegated exactness of the West, to the highest advantage.

These CHARACTERS consist properly of the *Words* which compose other languages; most of them supplies the place of a proposition; as one including within itself the force of a noun and a verb, of a substantive and its adjunct, or of an article and its object, in any other sense than may be affirmed respecting compound words in the Greek and the Sanskrit languages. However complicated any character may appear, still the component, though it embraces six or seven

other characters, like compounds in Greek and Sanskrit, express only one idea, and will possess a substantive, an adjective, a verb, &c. as capable of union with other characters as the simplest character in the language. Nor is any difference of gender, number, or case,—of mood, tense, or person, expressed by any alteration in the character: these are all either inferred from the connexion, or expressed, as in English, by certain auxiliary characters. These ideas may perhaps be rendered more intelligible by an example, with which we are furnished in the following advice of the Chinese Philosopher to his pupils, occurring in page 37 of the following work.

Transgressing you should not fear to return.

Here it is obvious, that the 5th character in this sentence, is compound of three others; on the left is 忄, the heart; above on the right is 罔 wu, confusing, palpitation; (which by the hyeh assigned to 罒 , the mouth, repeated twice 冂 and below is 亡 wu, flight, empty, low. These three characters, however, when united, express but one idea, that of the wish to leave; which readily unites with the auxiliary 則 chi, should, &c. and the negative

勿 not, in order to form the potential mood in the negative sense. We may also remark respecting the 4th character 改 *kai*, to return, that although it is formed of two others 己 *ki*, self, (the key) and 攵 *pûk*, to punish lightly, to chastise; yet when thus formed, it conforms with the others as an infinitive, as readily as though it were a simple character.

The specific difference then between the Chinese and other languages,* lies wholly in the principles on which the Characters or Words are formed: these being formed in the latter by the combination of certain Symbols termed Letters, in the former by the union of certain Pictures of the principal objects of sense, termed Primary or Elementary Characters.

Before we enter further on this subject, it may not be improper to premise, that it is well said by the acute and learned author of the "Philosophical Inquiry concerning Language and Universal Grammar," the truth be, that every ideation through which we exhibit any thing to another's contemplation, is either derived from natural attributes (or objects) and then it is an Intuition; or else from accidents quite arbitrary, and then it is a Sentence."† while it follows, that Words must necessarily be arbitrary symbols, since the words Mountain, and River, do not exhibit to the mind the least idea of these two objects, except by arbitrary association; it will also follow, that it is impossible for Characters intended as Intuitive

* It may be proper to observe here, that throughout the following dissertation, the term language, when applied to the Chinese, conveys the conception rather than the sound; in which peculiar, the true idea properly applies to the language of the nations who are considering the subject by sound, not by sight.

† See Harris's Hermes, page 368.

of natural objects, (however faint and rude the resemblance may be,) to form the basis of *another* Medium of communicating ideas, totally different. It is true, from the *Symbolic* Medium, but perhaps not less congenial with the nature of things. This manner describes and defines the Chinese Characters. They are this "other mode" alluded to by Horace, namely, Imitations of natural objects, combined in a variety of forms, in order to exhibit things and ideas "to the contemplation of others."

This enables us to answer a question acknowledged by the learned author himself to deserve attention; perhaps more satisfactorily than the want of a deeper acquaintance with the subject, permitted the judicious author himself to answer. The question is, "Why, in the common intercourse of mankind, have Imitations been neglected and Symbols preferred, although Symbols (or words) are only known by habit or institution, while Imitations are recognized by a kind of natural intuition?"* The answer is, that they have not been wholly neglected; and that while the Symbolic Method has been adopted by many nations, one third of mankind at least, have adopted the Imitative; with what advantage or disadvantage it is the business of the following work, and of every succeeding effort of the nature, to examine and develope. One fact, however, strikes us on the face of the subject; namely, that while the Symbolic Method has given rise to a Babel of tongues, a diversity of language which almost baffles enumeration; the Imitative mode has preserved a prepossessing uniformity, which has rendered it intelligible, if report may be credited, to more than three hundred millions of men; to the numerous populous of the vast empire of China, and to many kingdoms beside, from the inhabitants of Japan to those of Pale-

* See Essays, page 207

Cardoxo is being a fact carefully ascertained, "that the Chinese characters have an equal advantage with the Arabic numbers, of which the figures convey the same meaning wherever known."* Whether this uniformity has arisen from the nature of the Imitative system, or be merely an accidental circumstance, I shall leave to the decision of others. Had the Symbolic method however possessed the same advantage, what vast benefits might it not have poured forth to mankind, brought as it is with the wisdom and learning of the ancients, and the discoveries of the moderns! If it be however asked, what advantage has been derived from this circumstance by that part of mankind which has enjoyed this privilege; it may be asked in reply, Whether that state of superior tranquility which China has enjoyed for more than three thousand years, may not in some degree have been owing to that uniformity of ideas which, through this medium, has diffused itself throughout the immense population of China; and given a stability to its internal polity, which has enabled it to withstand the shock of the most powerful invaders; and in fact so completely to overcome its conquerors, as to constrain them to assimilate themselves to the manners, habits, and language of the Chinese, instead of introducing their own.

But to return. If the Imitative be the only medium beside the Symbolic through which ideas could have been conveyed, and if this medium be in itself so obvious as to render it a question deserving attention, "why in the common intercourse of men with men it was not preferred to the Symbolic;"—then the Chinese language assumes quite a different aspect: instead of appearing merely as the language of a particular kingdom, it appears, as a Medium of Communication, in rivalship with the Symbolic or Alphabetic Medium, adopted by nearly all other nations.

* See Hutchinson's Harmony, Vol. 1. page 105.

and urges its claim to superiority, not only on the ground of its inherent qualities, but from the fact of its having been adopted by one third of the globe, for a length of time as far pleaded by exactly any other language, as well as attended to circulation with circumstances of mutual stability and tranquility, to which almost all other causes have been strangers.* These claims it is our business, at [illegible] of truth, fairly to investigate, to weigh the advantages and disadvantages attending both systems, and impartially decide on which side reason and truth may appear to exist.

It has been already observed, that the Chinese Language is formed on principles totally different from those on which all other languages are formed. But however different it may be from those which are formed on the Symbolic plan, and however strange and unintelligible it may appear to us, it would perhaps be hazarding much, positively to affirm, that the Symbolic Method adopted by so many other nations, is less distant, or more congenial with reason. Familiarized from our earliest infancy to words consisting of syllables, characters, in themselves totally devoid of meaning, and these again into words to which we annex but abstract ideas, we are not aware with what amazement a person is filled, who is totally unacquainted with this method, and is presented to the Imagination, (a Chinese for example), when he is made acquainted with the process of forming significant words from syllables and characters, which in themselves have no kind of meaning.

Among the Chinese Characters, those which by them are styled, *Characters*, Marked or Expressive Characters, have the first claim on our attention

* It is urged that the Chinese language is spoken more universally; it deserves to be considered, whether the superiority, in this case, is not owing to the superior population of China over Europe.

THE ELEMENTARY CHARACTERS

There are in number, *Two hundred and fourteen*,* and consist of strong, lined, and angular strokes, which advance in number from one to fifty-two, and include every variety with respect to length, from the simple spot, to the longest oblique stroke, as well as that variety of position, which results from the oblique, the horizontal, and the perpendicular. It is, however, worthy of remark, that both the *circular* and the *curved* forms are excluded. Whatever of this nature appears in any character, is merely fancy and embellishment, and no way essential to the meaning of the character. Nor does the thickness or fatness of the stroke alter the meaning, any further than as inferring, in certain cases, whether the stroke has been struck upwards or downwards: that circumstance, in several instances, forming the specific difference between two characters, apparently alike in form.

These Elementary Characters enter into the composition of all the other characters of the Chinese Language; and merely as every part of a character must necessarily be an spot, a perpendicular, a horizontal, or an oblique stroke; for this would be reducing every character to these five strokes, and in reality saying nothing; but the fact is, that by far the greater part, if not all of the Chinese Characters, are formed by the union of several of these Elementary Characters, proceeding from two to seven or eight. Many of these, it is true, are abbreviated, for the sake of facilitating their union with others, (specimens of which abbreviations may be

* These Elementary characters are copied from the Imperial Dictionary. In 16 vols. 4to. now published from a number of others, by order of the Emperor Kang-hee, the second of the present dynasty. They are arranged in the order in which they stand in the Imperial Dictionary, which has also been carefully and repeatedly examined relative to the meaning of each character, as well as the works of Dr. Hager, Bayrier, &c. I feel a pleasure in adding, that whatever Dr. Marshman, and the other opponents of Dr. Hager may have said relative to his employing false characters from Fabricius, &c. &c. I have, except in a very few instances, found the meaning he has affixed to them exactly coincide with that given in the Imperial Dictionary, and with the manner also mentioned by the Chinese when I have consulted

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ters in the annexed Synopsis of Elementary Characters;) and in some of the compounds, a part of certain characters alone appears: in the greater number, however, every individual character may be distinctly traced, either in its proper or abbreviated form: and I cannot but suspect that a thorough investigation of the subject will shew, that these additional strokes (which may still be traced as parts of other characters) were inserted, not as mere casual strokes, but as representatives of the characters of which they form a part.

Relative to the Origin of these Elementary Characters, we are left wholly to conjecture. The invention of twenty-four elements which, void of meaning themselves, should yet combine words, according to Harris,* signifying by compact distinct ideas, has been esteemed so extraordinary a discovery, as almost to transcend the powers of the human mind. Whether this mode of expressing ideas, or the Imitative, adopted by the Chinese, be the most ancient, it is difficult to determine; but the latter seems to be simple and obvious, and hence more within the reach of the human mind. However difficult it might be to invent and combine letters, so as to form words to which ideas might be afterwards affixed; that it would be natural for a person who wished to retain or convey to another the idea of an object, to trace, in some rude manner, an Imitation or character which might in his opinion serve to represent it, is evident, not only from the example of travellers and others unacquainted with the principles of drawing, but even from the practice of children, who, in their juvenile frolics, often amuse themselves in their attempting to portray objects which forcibly strike their attention.

* "A sign may be defined, a mere sensation, not significant by Compact." Harris's Hermes, page 348. See also page 344 of the same work: "The Peripatetics (and who just reasons) would have definitions as well of Words as of Things, which is a part of their character to be a philosophic sect[illegible] by Compact."

The first efforts of this kind would probably be made in delineating Objects of Sense, and principally those of Sight; which, on examining the Elementary Characters of the Chinese, we find to be the case. Whether these Imitations would bear any particular likeness to the thing represented, it is not easy to determine; that this might be the design of them is perhaps more than probable, but that the resemblance should in many cases be so exact as of itself to demonstrate the object represented, is scarcely to be expected.* Nor is any thing of this kind intended to be affirmed respecting these Elementary Characters. They are laid before the reader simply as Elementary characters; and every man will judge for

* It may not be amiss, however, to relate here the opinion of the Wei Jesuit on the subject of the Chinese characters, which is certainly true in many cases of antiquity. "We have peculiar proof that the two radical characters of the Chinese were originally like our arithmetical and algebraic symbols; the Fuhi-ists are authors of visible objects, or figurative signs for simple ideas, which they have multiplied by the most ingenious combinations, and the forefathers metaphysics." Asiatic Researches, Vol. 2. page 374.

To this may be added the opinion of a Chinese writer on this subject, as quoted by Du Halde. Father Premare "According to Chinese writers, accord. to Fong Hing, the ancient characters used in the country were the pattern of visible objects, visible and animated; but as things merely intellectual could not be expressed by those figures, the gradation use of Chine consisted to represent the various operations of the mind by metaphors drawn from the productions of nature: thus the idea of roughness and of rationality, of sudden and rest, were conveyed to the eye by signs representing a mountain, the sky, a river, and the earth; the figures of the sun, the moon, and the stars, inherently intelligible, stood for intelligible and spiritual, but any thing audibly enough, or acting with sufficient understanding: Immortals, genii, fairies and many other questions, were painted in characters taken from clouds, from the firmament, and from the vegetable part of the universe; the different ways of marriage, agility and slowness, idleness and diligence, were expressed by various figures, birds, fish and quadrupeds. In this manner practices and sentiments were treated by the pencil, and ideas not subject to any sense were exhibited to the sight, and by degrees were established: new words increased, new explications arrived, the characters declined imperceptibly from their primitive figure, and the Chinese language became and only what now it is, subtle, but dull and abstract in the highest degree." Asiatic Researches Vol. 6. page 556.

himself respecting any real or imaginary resemblance between the *hand*,[5] the *head*,[6] the *heart*,[7] the *mouth*,[8] and the characters by which these are represented.*

Another enquiry seems to be, *What objects among those of Sense would be naturally selected, in order to form the basis of this grand Medium of Communication?* Now, although we can scarcely imagine, that, while all the languages formed on the Symbolic plan bear such evident marks of being formed rather by accident than design, a number of sages should have sat "in deep divan" in order to select certain objects which might form the basis of the Imitative system; we shall yet find these few Elementary characters include nearly all those objects of sense which are remarkably obvious; few being omitted, whose form or frequent use might render them worthy of notice. They include the most remarkable objects of nature; as the sun, the moon, a river, a mountain, fire, water, earth, wood, stone, &c. the principal parts of a house, as the *roof*, the *door*; as well as those utensils most frequently in use, as a knife, a spoon, (or chop-stick,) a seat, a box,

[5] see the hand.
[6] see the head.
[7] see the heart.
[8] see the mouth.

* The intelligent reader will easily perceive that the Chinese or inventors of these Symbolics in the objects they were intended to represent, never for their use the principle on which the Chinese language is formed: And the Chinese cannot chuse to imagination, the principle would have been the same. namely that of uniting two (or more) Symbolics or characters in order to express a third idea. The principle would indeed have been the same if one of the English names of the objects represented by these Elementary characters, (*hand, head, &c.*) had been united to express a third idea, which is actually the case in some few instances. But here our present help proceeding, that had the Chinese thought of combining the monosyllabic names as well as the representation of those objects included in the primary or elementary characters, their language might have spoken to the ear, as obviously as it now speaks to the eye, and thus have become a most complete language. For would this have been attended with any great difficulty, as few of their words comparatively, would have exceeded three or four syllables; and scarcely one would have exceeded our "seventeen-syllable" &c. &c.

a staff, &c. Domestic animals also find a place here, as the goat, the cow, the horse, the dog, &c. Next are the grand supports of life united, grain, palse, flesh, fish, &c. nor the primary relations of life, father, mother, son, daughter, however difficult to be represented. We find also among these not only a character to denote the body, but also one representing the soul or spirit, as well as characters to represent certain articles of worship. From their placing among these *Elementary* characters, the sword, the bow, the lance, the javelin, &c. we might be ready to suppose that the Chinese, even at this early period, had been somewhat accustomed to war: and their admitting among them such a complex art as *skill*, ornaments, needlework, a ship, &c. might lead us to imagine, that they were not at this time altogether ignorant of commerce and the arts.

Qualities, though somewhat more difficult of representation, are not wholly omitted, although all among the Elementary characters expressive of these, scarcely amount to thirty; among which will be found, however, such as most obviously strike the senses, as straight, crooked, great, small, dark, white, high, long or wide, &c.

To express *actions* by appropriate symbols would seem a task still more difficult: accordingly we find, on examining these elements, that this class is still smaller than the foregoing; a few however are admitted, which signify the most common actions of life; such as, to see, to speak, to eat, to walk, to run, to return, to stop, to enter, to follow, to move quickly, to lead, to arrive, &c. Such then are the ideas represented by these elements; which, as they compose the other characters, may be justly termed the ALPHABET of *the Chinese Language*, or *the* INITIATIVE Medium of Communication.

It may not be uninteresting to the curious mind, to notice the *degree of proportion* in which these respective elements enter into the composition of the other characters. Of this some idea may be formed by comparing with each other the number of characters which are classed underneath each element,* (which number the reader will find expressed in the Synopsis by the small figures placed at the end of the explanation of each character.) Among these he will find that *skin, grass or vegetation in general, air, water, and wood*, hold the first rank, the latter having 1232 characters into the formation of which it enters; air, water, 1333; and skin, vegetation, no less than 1363. The elements which, next to these, receive under them the greatest number of characters, are those which represent the *hand*, the *mouth*, and the *heart*, the first standing at the head of 1021; the second claiming in its quota 973; and the third, 956. *Ear*, the element for a woman, ranks next, standing at the head of 831; while *eye*, that for a man, includes only 719: but *ear*, the character intended to denote *virtue*, has underneath it a class containing 824. After these follow *grain*, a word, which includes in its class, 731; and *bone, or horn, gold*, under which are placed 719 characters. *Ear*, the character for *silk*, or *any thing fine and delicate*, and *child*, a *business*, that notable instrument of government among the Chinese, claim each an equal number, namely 634. *Tail, flesh, ear, a mountain, water, the eye, and child, the foot*, rank next, and include each of them somewhat more than five hundred characters; as does also, the element expressive of a *bird*. The elements which represent *earth, stone, thunder, clothing, and jewels*, contain each somewhat above four hundred charac-

* In the Chinese Dictionaries the other characters are classed under the Elementary characters, in the same manner as in our Dictionaries the words are classed under the various letters of the Alphabet. The element under which a character is classed, is at the end, marked by 10.

ten in their respective classes; as *ta ma*, a horse, and *kiu*, a dog: while *yu*, a *day*; *tau*, a knife; *chue*, a plate; *mae*, *tsze*, and *chuh*, mutton, stand each at the head of somewhat more than three hundred. These *thirty* of these elements, expressive of the primary objects of sense, enter into the composition of nearly twenty thousand characters, which probably constitute the better half of the characters included in the language.

If some elements however enter into the composition of a very great number of characters, others will be found to have so small a number placed under them as scarcely to entitle them to a place among the elements. The six characters which compose the class of one stroke, besides being all absolute, except *yih*, one, include together only ninety-five characters, and one of them includes only *two*! Among those consisting of many strokes, are also to be found forty, the respective classes of which contain no more than twenty characters each, and some of them only *ten*: the whole forty containing only *six hundred and fifteen*. Beside these, there are *twenty ordens*, the classes of which contain from *twenty* to *thirty-five* each; the aggregate amounting to *five hundred and fifty-seven*. Thus *eighty-four* of these elements include, in the whole of their classes, only fourteen hundred and twenty-seven characters, which is but four more than the number placed under class, vegetation! Among those which are at the head of so small a number may be found all those consisting of one stroke, the greater part of those which consist of two; more than one third of such as, exceeding six strokes, must be in some degree compound; and a few tokens which express ideas less general, as *pha*, a piece of cloth, *yue*, to extend the feet; *yuen*, to hop like a bird; *gwe*, and *jen*, a limit, &c.

The effective part of the Chinese Elements then, amount to about *one hundred*

and things. As the formation of the language from these, rather than from an Alphabet of Letters, constitutes the specific difference between this and other languages, it may not be improper to compare the two modes of combining elements with each other, in order to see on what side the advantages with respect to acquisition, retention, recollection, &c. really preponderate. If we examine the subject coolly and thoroughly, we shall perhaps find that the difficulty of acquiring these elements does not greatly exceed that of acquiring those which form the basis of the Symbolic Medium. For although fifty (including capitals) are nearly the amount of the characters which are employed in the Latin and the Greek, as well as the more modern languages of Europe, this is not the case with those of India. The Sanskrit alphabet, from which most of the other Indian alphabets are formed, presents to the view of the learner more than six hundred combinations of characters really distinct from each other; namely the alphabet formed into its due variety of syllables; which on examination will appear full as difficult of acquisition, as the Elements of the Chinese language. Nor is the parallel just stated, when instituted between the letters of European alphabets, and the Elementary characters of the Chinese; these more properly answer to the syllables, of which European languages are composed, than to the letters: which should rather be compared with the strokes of which the elements are composed.* And although the Roman and Greek alphabets do not, in the manner of the Indian alphabets, admit separate characters to express the different combina-

* The idea may perhaps be illustrated by an example. The characters are, ⟨illegible⟩ elements, which like the English word *thorn*, consists of only two alphabetical parts or elementary parts, ⟨illegible⟩ a name for the character on the left; and ⟨illegible⟩ a word, that on the right. If we were, however, to dissect the word *thorn*, we should find three alphabetical letters in other names as in this: In imagining the elements of our language to consist of syllables, we ought to take such as are represented to each other; in which case the number will amount to five hundred, and the elementary characters to the syllables, of which English words are composed.

tions of the letters, as pra, pre, pri, pro; ch, rp, sh, sl, &c. yet these syllables are so really the component and elementary parts of European languages, as the combinations above-mentioned, are of the Sanskrit and the other Indian languages. Let any one then examine those words of one syllable, bab, cab, dab, mab, &c. which Dyche has collected, to the number of at least two thousand, in his valuable, though now obsolete elementary work, all of which really enter into the formation of the English language; or let him only run over the collection of elementary syllables, bla, ble, bli, blo, blu, &c. to the number of perhaps four hundred, found in the first pages of almost all other books of this kind, which, though deficient of meaning, are in reality, the elements of the English Language; and he will probably be convinced that its elementary characters (for what is a combination of strokes, whether placed perpendicularly or horizontally, but a new character?) far exceed in number those of the Chinese language; and were it needful to commit them to memory, the task would be found little less difficult than that of treasuring up in memory the Chinese elements.

Nor would it be easy to prove that the (syllabic) elements of the Symbolic medium of communication, are more easily retained in memory than those of the Chinese language. Perhaps a Chinese might find it quite as difficult to remember the element *kia*, as *jan*,* the element for man; to preserve in memory the element *mat*, as to recollect *san*,† the elementary character for mountain. Nor is there any greater operose, I will not say *facile* and *ratio*, (for these though strictly elements, convey no idea,) but to the words man and mountain, to annex in the mind an idea of the object which they represent, than to these two Chinese elements, even though the latter should be esteemed *perfectly arbitrary symbols* instead of *imitative*. The difficulties which we therefore encounter in our child-

* 人 Jin, a man. † 山 San, a mountain.

hood before we come even to *read* English, may in reality be equally great with those encountered relative to the elements of the Chinese language, although our infant years, and the care and pains of our preceptors at that tender period, may render us insensible to the fatigue.

It may perhaps be objected here, that, although the difficulty of acquiring the elements, be in both cases equally great, yet when a person has made himself master of the combined characters of the Indian language, and even of the first elements (or the alphabet) of European languages, he can *read any thing* in the language, which is not the case in the Chinese language; as there, the union of two or more characters forms a new one, which also assumes a different name, as well as expresses a different idea. This difference is readily allowed, and that, although any one who may have perfected himself in the two hundred and fourteen elements of the Chinese language, can at pleasure decompose any character, however complex, and reduce it to its primary elements, he is still unacquainted with the name of that character, and cannot always guess with certainty at the meaning. But what is the actual amount of the advantage? It is true, that a child born in England, through his being habituated to English conversation from his earliest infancy, has generally made a considerable advance in the language by the time he has completely mastered its elementary letters and syllables, which circumstance we are apt to overlook, and to ascribe that to a mere knowledge of the elements, which is the result of years' actual acquaintance with the language. Let us however observe a foreigner, who is master of the Roman alphabet, and therefore able to read any English book. Has he not still every thing to learn? Are not several years requisite to bring him, in any moderate degree, acquainted with the language? View an English boy placed at a grammar school: he can, it is true, *merely read* Cæsar, and Cicero, and Horace; but what is this

toward understanding the *subject*? Has he not perhaps seven years to toil before he becomes thoroughly acquainted with Latin? Did indeed the mere ability to read a language, put a man in possession of it, a day or two might suffice to make a complete scholar in Greek, and a few hours an adept in Hebrew!

This enables us to understand the meaning of an assertion so commonly urged respecting the Chinese language, as a proof of its impracticability, namely, that many of the Chinese literati, after spending their whole lives in study, are scarcely able to make themselves acquainted with all the characters in the language. We, in whose minds a letter and a character are nearly synonymous terms, stand amazed on hearing this, and are ready to ask, Is it require such a length of time to acquire the *characters* of the language, when will a person be able to *read* and understand it thoroughly? The simple meaning, however, when the nature of the Chinese language is duly considered, will evidently appear to be, that a most learned in Chinese, may perhaps, after a long course of reading, meet with a word or character, for the name and the precise meaning of which he has to consult the dictionary, although he may be thoroughly acquainted with all its component parts. A case this, however, which may possibly occur in Greek, or Latin, or even in English, to a person whose knowledge of these languages is far from being superficial.

But it will not have escaped the penetration of the sagacious reader, that a man who is thoroughly acquainted with the two hundred and fourteen Chinese Elementary characters, stands on much higher ground with respect to a *further* acquaintance with the language, than a foreigner who has mastered the four hundred elementary characters of his, his, his; her, her, her, &c. which in reality form the

basis of English words. Unite, for instance, two of these syllabic elements, *bar*, and *bar*, the only two of them on which are capable of union. These indeed form a word which conveys a complete idea to the mind; namely that of a man accustomed to shave; but dejoin them, and what assistance do they afford the mind in guiding it to the meaning of the compound word? or even in recollecting it when known? The first syllabic element of the word *iodoret*, happening to denote a *bar* of iron, may perhaps assist the mind in recollecting the instrument which the artist used, particularly if the edge of it were sufficiently dull; but this is most evident: as these syllabic elements have in general no precise meaning of their own, they cannot assist the mind either by way of association or opposition. This however is seldom the case with the Chinese elements. Even when the association of characters to express the complex idea, is "darker than the darkest oracle," some assistance is afforded to the mind at least by way of opposition, if not by way of association; either from some likeness in the ideas, or the total absence of likeness. If we take even the character 剃, *thi*, which denotes in Chinese the man who shaves, or more properly the operation itself, we shall find, that although it might be difficult to guess with certainty the meaning of the word from merely viewing the elements of which it is composed, *tao*, 刀 the instrument or the action of cutting, and *ti*, 弟 respect; yet when once known, these may assist the mind in recollecting the character by association of ideas. What is there again in the elements of the English word *bare*, which would either suggest the idea of *bar*, or enable a person to recal it when known otherwise than by arbitrary association? Whereas in the Chinese character 鐵 *tieh*, which has beneath, 金 *kin*, the character for *tin*, and above, the character *mok*, 木 *wood*, repeated to denote a grate or *wood*, it requires little labor on reviewing the character, to recal the idea, although the meaning

might not strike the mind at the first view. The same may be said of *tsiu*, hungry, compounded of *gnu* I, and *nik*, eat, and of a thousand others. The Chinese language then, formed on the Imitative plan from two hundred and fourteen *significant* elements, is not possessed of equal with respect both to prompt acquisition and subsequent recollection, which are found in the language formed on the *Symbolic* plan.

The circumstance of the other characters being compounded of these primary elements, also assists a person in writing the characters, as well as in distinguishing them from each other, in nearly as great a degree as the letters of the alphabet assist us in the Symbolic system. The character *ta* four, consists of fourteen strokes, six of which are perpendicular, and eight, horizontal. A character composed of such a number of strokes, thus differing in their position and length, the mind might seem bewildered in attempting to recollect. Were the character to be viewed however as consisting of only two elements with which the mind is already familiarized, *mien*, a door, and *gnu*, the ox, little more difficulty will appear in recollecting and writing it, than in writing the *English* word *harden*. Thus also the, *to* watch, to find or entertain another, as a man entertains a guest, is a character which consists of twenty-two strokes. The idea of recollecting and writing a character containing twenty-two strokes, perpendicular, horizontal, and oblique, might seem terrific to the mind. All this vanishes however, the moment we observe that it is formed of two others, namely *yu* rain, the character on the left; and, *kwan*, a handle, virtuous, that on the right.

Perhaps, on perusing these observations, some one, instead of viewing the Chinese language as unspeakably difficult of acquisition may be ready to imagine

on the other hand, with the learned Fourmont, that "the knowledge of these elements is sufficient to enable us to understand the characters of which they form the component parts, and that in effect to put us in possession of the whole language;"* so at least that there must be an evident and very striking affinity between the meaning of every compound character, and that of the characters of which it is composed. The writer of these pages confesses that this once appeared to him so rational, as to make him for a considerable time dissatisfied with the explanations of every character in which he could not recognize the ideas expressed by the primitive elements, with at least as much precision, as he could deduce the meaning of a Greek compound from that of its component parts. This idea he pursued till he found himself led thereby into many and mistake rather than solid fact. Now was he entirely deprived of it, till he had an opportunity of examining for himself the Imperial Dictionary before-mentioned. In this dictionary, however, in which he expected to have found the meaning of every character deduced from its primitive elements, with the elegance and precision of Hoophelius, he found himself almost constantly disappointed: although, he in many instances, found the parts of a compound character accurately described, it was always for the sake of pointing out some current error in forming the character, and assisting the pupil to write it with accuracy, than for the sake of defining the meaning of the character in a clear and distinct manner from that of its component parts.

Indeed, a due consideration of the subject will convince us that the nature of things must forbid our expecting this in the Chinese characters: for, not to say that a great part of the, as well as of the language formed on the

* See Fourmont, as quoted by Du Halde: page last.

Symbolic plan, may have been formed rather by chance than by any exact and determinate rule, the elements of the Chinese language are little more than two hundred, while the Greek roots amount to more than three thousand. Whoever considers therefore that variety of ideas which must necessarily be expressed, even by thirty thousand characters, will perceive, that it is scarcely possible for the meaning of these in every instance to be clearly and distinctly deduced from the combination of only two hundred and fourteen primary characters, representing principally objects of sense. Not to add, with the ingenious Barrow, that "the sense is sometimes so hid in metaphor, and in allusion to particular customs or ways of thinking, that when all the component parts of a character are well understood, the meaning may yet remain in obscurity."* It must be obvious, therefore, that an acquaintance with the component parts of a character can seldom so far supersede the necessity of a dictionary, as to enable a person to fix precisely on any specific idea, amidst the various and multiplied shades of meaning which must necessarily result from the formation of thirty thousand different characters out of only two hundred and fourteen. This may be easily inferred from the case of certain words in our own language, which are actually compounded of two significant words: as for example the verb *to understand*, which is compounded of the preposition *under*, and the verb *to stand*. Now if it be granted that some remote idea of the meaning affixed to the two simple words, was originally intended to be conveyed by this compound, yet were a foreigner, without consulting a dictionary, or the common acceptation of the word, to attempt defining the meaning of it from that of its component parts, he would be sufficiently bewildered in conceiving the sense of the passage in which it occurred. The same may be said of *out-wit*, *handy*, *waterside-boy*, *knowing*, *afterwards*, and some others. It is true indeed, that were we to adopt that mode

* Barrow's Travels in China, page 178.

of accounting for the composition of Chinese characters, which the author of Horæ use in analysing the English verb to understand,* we might easily account for the composition of a multitude of the Chinese characters; but whether this would be the best method of gaining truth, might be with many a matter of doubt.

The necessity of a dictionary in order to ascertain with precision the ideas attached to each compound character, seems to have been an idea long familiar to the Chinese. In the preface to the *Imperial Dictionary of Kang-hee*, begun a hundred years ago,† no less than seven dictionaries are enumerated as existing prior to that time. In this dictionary the sense of each character is given, and supported by classical authorities, with a clearness and precision equal perhaps to that of our best lexicographers.

From the whole it is easy to perceive the use which a prudent man will make of the Chinese Elementary characters in studying the language: for a clear and precise idea of the meaning of the characters in general, he will have recourse to the connexion of the sentence—to commentaries,—and to dictionaries; while, to assist him in retaining the characters in memory, in bringing them to recollection, in writing them, in discriminating them from each other, he will carefully and treasure up in his mind, the elements which form their component parts.

* "The English word understand consists of seven letters, or four syllables, and is compounded of the two words stand and under. Why may we not then suppose, that the Genius of the first inventor of characters saw a kind of form [such as] which the first Inventor of Chinese letters may, and which was intended to express a mere idea, or single conception?" Horæ, page 314.

† "The order for compiling this dictionary was issued by Kang-he [the Cang hi of the Books] in the 4th day of the 1st month, in the 43rd year of his reign." According to the Books he began his reign, A. D. 1662.

Nor is this mode of tracing the significant elements which form the different characters in the language, destitute of amusement.* Those who delight in tracing the operations of the mind in different nations and ages, and in observing the various ways in which it combines ideas, it will often be entertaining to notice the association of ideas which must have given birth to the formation of many of these compounds; and while their quaintness may perhaps occasion a smile, the degree of connexion observable in them, forbids our thinking they could be formed entirely without design. Thus *kan*, 好 the character used in common for *good*, formed by the union of *tsze*, 子, a son, and *nu*, 女 a daughter, would almost lead us to imagine, that their idea of the summum bonum centered in the domestic felicity often enjoyed by the man, who, in connubial bonds, is blessed with a numerous progeny. *Nan*, 怒, their character for *anger*, which is formed of 奴 *nu*, a *female slave*, *yun*, 又 *succession*, and 心 *sin*, the *heart*, seems to suggest the idea of their esteeming anger a feminine weakness. *Sang*, 聖, their character for a *sage* is compounded of *gee*, 耳, the *ear*, *kow*, 口, the *mouth*, and *wang*, 王 *chief* or *lord*: Was this intended to suggest, that he alone is wise who governs his ear as well as his mouth? who restrains the former from hearing, as well as the latter from speaking evil? Many others may be observed in the existing work which may perhaps appear much more expressive; but as I could not feel warranted in positively affirming that they were actually formed from such a combination of ideas, I forbore to analyze them in this minute manner, lest I should mislead the reader by substituting fancy for solid fact. Any one, however, by an attentive perusal of the annexed Synopsis of the Elementary characters, may thus analyze the

* "The composition of the characters is capable of exercising a very considerable degree of ingenuity, and the analysis of them is extremely entertaining to a foreigner." Barrow, p. 356.

characters within, with clauses so much resembling as to scarcely distinguish the letters or syllables which form an English word.

Having here then, explained the Elements which form the basis of the language, it is but needful to enlarge on the Compound characters: a remark or two on each class of these will be sufficient to show the manner in which they are formed. Should any one however question, whether two hundred and fourteen characters were sufficient, to be capable of producing that vast multitude of characters which the Chinese language is said to contain, he has only to examine the matter on the principle of Permutations of Numbers, in order to convince himself, that two hundred and fourteen characters, united only as high as the number seven, are capable of producing more than a hundred and fifty thousand compounds; which number, for reasons I shall presently assign, appears to me four times greater than the real number of the Chinese characters.

The first, which in appreciating merits to them, demands our first attention after the elementary characters, is that which consists of *two complete elementary characters and part of another*. Such is the case with *tien*, 天 heaven, which is formed by adding a horizontal stroke to 大 *ta*, great: with *pun*, 本 original, formed by adding one stroke to 木, *mu*, wood, or a tree: and with *fo*, 弼 *fou-tsai* support, the key of which is *kung*, 弓, a bow, and the upper part of the middle stroke, part of *yang*, 羊, a sheep or goat. Several characters of this class are also formed by adding to the key-character, certain strokes which it is difficult precisely to ascertain as forming a part of any particular character. This is the case with *pei*, 不, not, the key of which is 一, *yei*, one: but the lower part can be identified as no particular character; with *kim*, 今, now, the key of which is

jen 人 a man, but the lower part are distinguishable; and with the negative 無 wou, the top of which is 𠂉 fei, for the character below, but the upper part has an obscurity. This class, which is not very numerous, forms the only exception to the general principle which pervades the Chinese language; namely, "that of forming new characters from two or more significant elements." These, however, after being distinguished as one character and part of another, are frequently used in the composition of other characters; of which fou 否 is an example, which denotes "no, not, contrary to reason," and is composed of 不 pou, no, and kou, 口 a mouth. These characters, therefore, although totally distinct from the primary elements, may in a certain sense be termed Simple characters, which is the reason I shall give them in the present volume, by way of distinguishing them from those which are formed by the union of two or more significant characters. Many of this class are pictures of almost perpetual recurrence.

The Second class of compounds are those which are formed by the union of two of the elementary characters. Of these a great variety occurs; but it will be difficult to deduce even from the component parts of these a meaning so clear and precise as to supersede the use of a dictionary. Yen 仁 which the philosopher excels in this work as the highest degree of virtue, is a character of this class, and is formed from jen 人 a man, and eurh, 二 two; but whether it was hereby intended to connect with the idea of a man, that of society and affection, or that of equality and justice, is difficult to say; although it is not improbable that one of these might be included. Pe, 佰 composed of jen 亻 a man, and pe 百 a hundred, speaks its own meaning somewhat more clearly; as it literally denotes a company of a hundred men. Also, 𠇍 , to rob, which is

compound of 門 mun, a door, and 口 ku, the mouth, may probably have some allusion to the idea conveyed: as may 聞 mun, to hear, compound of mun, 門 a door, and part, 耳 the ear. But clan, 閑, to pass in and out, which is formed of 門 mun, a door, and nu, 女 a female, could not surely suggest to the Chinese sage the idea of binding up the feet of their females from their birth, in order to incapacitate them for the means to inpet pratt! Can, 忏 to be grieved, displeased, angry, formed by nun, 忄 the heart, and un, 干 a knife, placed above it, may perhaps allude to the pain occasioned by the amputation; but whether by forming way 枉 crooked, perverse, from 王 wang, to reign, and 小 on the heart, they intended to intimate that the heart is perverted and corrupted by ambition, is perhaps difficult to determine: this association of ideas however assists a person in remembering the character. Pan, 扳, to tie, to bind or drive a horse, is formed from ku, 口 the mouth, and 寸 pon, the hand. This seems not altogether incongruous with the idea represented. But whether clan, 揩, to wipe, to cleanse, which is formed from pon, 寸 the hand, and tan, 臣 a servant, have a relation to the idea meant to be conveyed, the good father can best determine who have the superintendence of domestic concerns. It may not be improper to adduce an example of the union of an elementary character with one of the class I have named Simple: One occurs in Section xix. of Chapter ix. Book i. namely Clan 錯, to mix, to disconcert, to confuse, which is formed by adding the key kum, 金, gold, to 昔 sak, formerly, anciently; which latter character is formed by adding to the key pat, 日 a day, certain strokes not recognizable as any distinct character. This may suffice to shew the nature of this class of compound characters.

The Third* division of the Chinese compounds consists of three primary ele-

* It might be observed, that the mode of ranking the Chinese characters according to the number of elements which they contain has no place in the Chinese books, but is adopted merely for the sake of perspicuity.

ments united together. Of this, however, there are two kinds; such as consist of three separate characters, and such as consist of three characters, two of which being previously united, have assumed another name and meaning. This circumstance deserves particular notice in examining the union of the characters. In gan, conversation, a word which forms a part of the title of this book, we observe three distinct characters, gan, a word, the character on the left; and two characters on the right, namely , ang, fire, the above, and , kin, a mouth, the character below. These two on the right however form a new character, namely ang, , the pronoun *I*, (but on what principle I am at a loss to divine, unless with the notion of uttering words.) This last must be carefully regarded in analysing all characters, which consist of more than two elements. The reader will find that on this principle many of the characters which are described as formed from two others only, while to the eye they appear to contain three, four, or even five separate elements. In this spot, it appeared better to describe a character by its principal component parts, than to analyse it more minutely; which indeed the reader can do himself at pleasure by the help of the Elementary Characters. It is necessary however that he be cautious how he attempts to derive the meaning from the smaller divisions of a character rather than the larger: a foreigner might analyse the English word *count-er-act*, by saying, that the first syllable *count*, means, in number; the second syllable *er*, is a termination generally used in forming the substantive from the verb; hence both would denote "one who counts," while the last syllable, *act*, signifies the act or deed of counting! This method however would assist him but little in obtaining a just idea of the word.

The number of those in this class which are formed by the union of three separate characters, is by no means so great as we might imagine; as in many charac-

are clearly distinguished their distinct elements; two, on further examination, are often found composing a new character, and sometimes expressing a new idea; this is in some degree the case in 焚 *fen*, to burn, quoted page 18, in which three characters can be evidently discerned, namely 火 *ho*, fire, below, and above 木, mu, wood, repeated. But these two upper characters, previously uniting, have formed a new character, 林 *lin*, and denote a grove, or a clump of trees. Yet there are some which are entirely formed of three separate characters, of which class is 聖 the character mentioned before as denoting a sage: which consists of 王 *wang*, a king, 耳 the ear, and 口 the mouth. 貴 *kui*, rich, honourable, is another of doubtful, being formed of 中, in, 一 one and 貝 *pe*, a pearl, with what view, I must leave the curious in Chinese to develope.

It ought further to be observed, that even the two great divisions into which a compound character is generally to be divided, will not always suggest the idea expressed by the compound. It has been already hinted, that at the distance of time it is often almost impossible to ascertain the combination of ideas which existed in the mind of the person who first formed the compound. They will however often help a person somewhat nearer to it than he would otherwise be. 詩 poetry, is an instance of this. On the left is 言 *yen*, a word, on the right, 寺 *che*, the truth and this 寸 *tsun*, a measure: the two latter however being previously united, form the character 尋 a temple, a residence for priests, &c. Chin. 寸 *a measure*, might convey some remote idea of poetry as consisting of measured words, but if we suppose that poetry was anciently used among the Chinese in worship, as was the case in almost every other nation, the genuine idea of poetry will be suggested somewhat more plainly from the union of 言 a word, and 寺 a place devoted to sacred exercises.

Those which consist of *four* elementary characters may be termed a Fourth class. The same circumstance which was remarked in the last class, exists in an equal degree in this, and in all the compounds which exceed this number, namely, that, of the primary characters which form the compound, two of them, and sometimes three, are previously united in order to form a new character. Of this kind many occur. Wai, 歪, *distort*, the 65th character in the appendix, which occurs p. 10, is evidently compounded of four elements, viz. 不 *the first, beneath*; and above it *yai*, — *one*, viz. 口 *the mouth*, and 主 *chu*, *a word*. The latter three are, however, previously united, and form the character 咅 *pou*, *many one*, *any one*, so frequently occurring in the work before us. Tsu, 鑿, the fourth character in the sentence, quoted p. 10, of this introduction, affords another instance of this nature. This character consists of four elements, two on the left hand, and three on the right; but the three on the right are previously united, and form one character, viz. 毀, *great, and the ordinary*: it may also be further remarked, that of these three, the two upper ones have been previously united, namely the two *tou*, which, dropping their name, form the character 𠂤 mentioning *polytheism*. So that *tsu* 鑿, *trembling*, is compound of *tou* 冖 *the earth inverted*; 毀 *tou*, *ordinary*, &c. is formed of *tou*, 冖 *trembling*, and *yau* 幺, *small, low*; and *tou* 毀 *tou*, is formed by adding *yau tou*, *ordinary*, 𠂤 *tou*, *the heart, the key of the character*. Some few of this class, however, contain four separate characters: of this number is 𡈽 *kin*, *rich*, which is formed by uniting 𠂉 *a roof*, 一 *yai*, *one*, and 口 *kou*, *the mouth*, with 田 *tsu*, *field*. Query. Did the Chinese philologists intend to convey the idea that he must necessarily be in a state of affluence, who, living in a stately mansion, has the produce of a whole field to supply only *one mouth*?

The characters which are formed of a higher number of elements than *five*, differ so little from these, that to attempt analysing them would be a needless occasion on the time and patience of the reader. I will therefore conclude this part by adducing only one character more, which shall be one of those which contain eight primary elements: it is a character of *fifty-two* strokes, the highest number of which any character in the Imperial Dictionary is composed. This character exemplifies several of the observations already made. The key of it is *ma*, , rain; underneath which is placed , *tien*, a field: this compound is , *hoei*, the character which denotes thunder: four of these united, form the character, , which is termed *pang*, and denotes that noise which accompanies a tremendous peal of thunder that reverts round the air. That this character, which includes eight others, and contains no less than fifty-two strokes, may be resolved into two simple elements, *ma*, rain, and *tien*, a field; the recollection of which alone is quite sufficient both to recal the character to mind, and enable any one to write it with perfect accuracy.

We have thus taken a very brief view of the characters which compose the Chinese language—have traced them as originating in a few primary elements distinct in their form and posing in their significations, which combine themselves in various ways, till at length from two hundred and fourteen elements is formed a language, if we may believe one of their own writers, "not only clear and forcible, but rich and elegant in the highest degree[a]." We now proceed to a few Remarks on

[a] See the opinion of Li-pay-pe, mentioned by Sir William Jones in his Asiatick Researches, page 82, and given at the same, at page 1 of the Introduction.

The SOUNDS, or the PRONUNCIATION, of the CHINESE CHARACTERS.

HOWEVER copious the Chinese language may appear when we consider the variety of ideas expressed by its numerous characters, the oral part of the language on which we are now entering, is more confined perhaps than that of any other language on earth. This is partly owing to its being deficient in certain sounds; the letter r being utterly unknown in the language, and although they have what the Port Royal Greek Grammar terms the "three smooth mutes," p, k, and t, which are the effect of the first effort of their respective organs, the Chinese seem to have stopped here—of the next, or the intermediate class, b, g, d, formed by a further effort of these organs, they appear to be destitute. But the principal cause is, their confining of the language, or more properly the pronunciation of it, to the Monosyllabic form, beyond which the Chinese philologists have never ventured to stray.

The Chinese Sounds, or the Names of the Characters, are however evidently formed on the syllabic plan. The name* of every character in the Imperial

* The ingenious Bishop suggests, that the characters "have each a name which serves as a mnemonic clue to the memory." This is a very formidable thought to the mere contemplating the variety of Chinese characters, which are supposed to amount to many thousand; more names which I could never apply to mind, even when to the difficulty of fixing the characters in memory, we join the language with such force as almost forever to put me from attempting it. As I advanced, however, the idea appeared to be unfounded; although there are many characters the names of which seldom occur in conversation, or in the poor rifle of books to be found in common Chinese houses, several syllables which are used in conversation for their names; such as, tien, heaven; tsze, son; shwuy, water; yuen, sun; &c. &c. are the characters which express those objects or qualities.

b

Dictionary, which of course includes nearly every word in the language, is produced from the union of two sounds or syllables: thus tien, a path, &c. is produced from ting, and kiaou; the former, as the initial power, losing all beside the first letter, and the latter, which performs merely the office of a *final*, dropping its initial. In the same manner from y-ue, and ky-an, is formed yue, a moon, and kiu-a-kan and kiu-an, kan, conversation, one of the characters which form the title of this work. These Initial and Final powers are laid down in the Chinese dictionaries, particularly that of the Emperor *Kang-hee*, with a regularity and precision, we should little expect in a language so deficient in its oral part.

Of the Series of Sounds which constitute the Initial *powers of the Chinese language.*

In the Imperial dictionary, the *Initial* sounds of the Chinese language are divided into nine classes or series. The first five, and the eighth series, consist each of four sounds. The sixth and seventh, which appear to be sibilants, contain five each; and the ninth contains two. The manner in which each series should be formed, is defined in the Imperial Dictionary with the greatest accuracy, (as subjoined below the different series.) In the above dictionary, these thirty-six Initials are also placed across the head of the page in twelve different tables, in the order given here: the Finals (described hereafter,) being placed perpendicularly in the right margin. The sounds produced from the union of these, are found at the left angles: as, in the Multiplication Table, the number 35 is found at the right angle formed by the lines proceeding from 7 and 5.

The first and third of each series are simple sounds, the second is an aspirate, and the fourth a mixed. These being used merely as initials, the final part of the syllable is constantly dropped in enunciation. The series are as follows:

1. 见 K-in, 溪 kh-e, 群 k-wan, 疑 ng-e.*

2. 端 T-uin, 透 th-ou, 定 t-ang, 泥 ng-e.†

3. 知 Ch-e, 徹 chh-i, 澄 ch-ing, 娘 n-yang.‡

4. 幫 P-ang, 滂 ph-ang, 並 p-ing, 明 m-ing.§

5. 非 F-wui, 敷 fh-u, 奉 f-ung, 微 m-ei.‖

6. 精 Ts-ing, 清 tsh-ing, 從 ts-ung, 心 s-in, (or sun) 邪 s-e.¶

7. 照 Tch-ou, 穿 tchh-in, 狀 tch-ang, 審 sh-in, 禪 sh-yen.**

8. 影 Y-ing, 曉 h-yeu, 喻 y-ou, 匣 hh-ia.††

9. 來 L-ai (or lai) 日 y-ut (or yit‡) ‡‡

N. B. These characters, of which only three are elementary ones, appear to have been selected merely for the sake of describing the sounds, in the same manner as the words which are placed at the head of our Pronouncing Dictionaries.

*Proceeding from the lower teeth. †Pronounced with the tip of the tongue placed between the teeth. ‡Pronounced with the tongue raised. §Pronounced by strongly closing the lips. ‖Pronounced by gently closing the lips. ¶Pronounced with the tongue put to the tip of the upper teeth. **Pronounced with the tongue placed right against the upper teeth. ††Pronounced from the back part of the mouth. ‡‡Formed half with the tongue and half with the upper teeth. ‡This initial is pronounced by rounding as it would on the usual sound, something like yu-e.

On this alphabetic outline, (for what is it less?) faithfully copied from the Imperial Dictionary, it may not be improper to make a remark or two: From the directions given for pronouncing each of these nine classes or series of sounds, it is easy to perceive their nature. Although the first series, *Kia*, *Khia*, &c. are described as proceeding from the under-teeth, (*literally* "under-teeth sounds,") it is evident that neither *Kia*, nor *Khia*, is of the class called Dentals by European grammarians: they are evidently Gutturals. What then are these series? Let any one refer to the Sanskrit alphabet, and he will perceive, that they are the Lingual series, *retained* in that alphabet, more imperfectly executed, indeed, but finished perhaps with a greater boldness and more precision of design. The Sanskrit alphabet contains five series of consonants, and eight unconnected letters; the Chinese Table contains eight series or (two unconnected) letters.* While the Sanskrit alphabet however has two modifications of the consonant *t*, namely, the dental *t*, and that which Dr. Carey in his grammar terms the lingual *t*, the Chinese retain only the dental series, which they place the second in order: in the Sanskrit alphabet it forms the third series.

Any one, in order to convince himself of the affinity existing between these two systems, has only to place the corresponding series of the Sanskrit alphabet underneath the first four series of these Chinese sounds thus:

Chinese,	K-ia	kh-ia	k-wan	—	gw-ang
Sanskrit,	K-a	kh-a	g-a	gh-a	gn-ana
Chinese,	T-sin	th-in	t-ang	—	ng-ai
Sanskrit,	T-a	th-a	d-a	dh-a	n-a

* That is, if we consider the last two forms of the nasal series as duplicated: the Chinese phonologists, however, seem to consider these two letters as compound.

Chinese,	Chin	chh-e	ch-ing	—	ts-ung
Sanscrit,	Ch-a	chh-a	j-a	jh-a	gn-ña
Chinese,	P-ing	ph-ing	p-ing	—	m-ing
Sanscrit,	P-a	ph-a	b-a	bh-a	m-a

This surprising coincidence of the two first letters and the concluding sound of these series, with the corresponding letters in the Sanscrit alphabet, enables us to understand them better perhaps than many of the Chinese at the present day. I have been able to obtain from no one a satisfactory reason why the first and third characters in these series have nearly if not exactly the same power, and why they ranked if thus superfluous. Any one acquainted with the Sanscrit and the other Indian alphabets, will, however, by comparing the former with the Chinese system, feel pretty strongly convinced that the third sound of the first series would have been g-a [g hard,] the third sound of the second series, d-a; that of the third, j-a, and that of the fourth, b-a, had the Chinese thus far improved their powers of enunciation; as it is unreasonable to suppose, that a system so evidently formed on regular principles, should affix precisely the same sound to two characters in a series of *four*. I suspect, therefore, that however much the modern Chinese may confound these two characters, something of the sound of g, and j, and d, and b, was once actually attached to the third characters in their four respective series; and that a further investigation of the Chinese pronunciation will discover some vestige* of this existing at the present time.

* Indeed whoever attends with a nice ear to the manner in which a Chinese pronounces the first and the third sounds of these series, will be convinced, that when he attempts to pronounce P-ing, the third of the second series, and Ninth from Ends the first, he approaches to the very degree in the sound of the English

Nor does it militate against this co-incidence of the Chinese Initials with the Sanskrit Consonants, that each of these series is in a degree imperfect. The Tamul alphabet, which is derived from the Sanskrit, is no less deficient, having, if we may rely on the grammar printed at Tranquebar in 1738, only the first and fifth letters of each series. But the circumstance of these Sanskrit and Chinese series containing each a complete set of vocals, beginning with *a* and terminating with the labials, is a co-incidence scarcely to be paralleled in any other two languages not derived from each other.

If however the first four series of the Chinese initials present such a coincidence with the same series in the Sanskrit alphabet, the next four exhibit a degree of refinement which seems unknown even to the Sanskrit grammarians. The 13th series, *F-ooe, fh-ee, f-ang, m-er*, directed to be pronounced by "greatly closing the lips," is evidently a refinement on *p-a, ph-a, b-a*, &c. the fifth series of the Sanskrit grammarians, which seems never to have entered their minds.

The Sixth series, *to-ue, th-ing, ts-ang, s-ee, s-e*, seems to be the first or dental sibilant of the Sanskrit alphabet formed into a series. That this series consists of sibilants, seems evident from the direction given to pronounce it with the tongue placed at the tip of the upper-teeth, as well as from the two latter characters in the series having exactly the power of *s*, although the other three are by the people of Canton confounded with the second series, *ch*, &c. It is not however improbable that the first three sounds of this and the second sibilant series may form a kind of medium between that, and the palatal or *ch* series.* This series contains five

*The pandits in Bengal always pronounce the sibilant vocal in the 27th point of the Sanskrit alphabet, although this is intended to be pronounced by the pandits of other provinces.

sounds, but it is difficult for a European ear to distinguish between the two last, and indeed between the first and the third.

The fourth series, Tch-a, tchh-a, &c. from the direction given to pronounce it with the tongue "right against the upper teeth," seems to be the *second* sibilant in the Sanskrit alphabet, (or the *initial* power expressed in English by *sh*, formed into a *complete* series. This appears also from the two latter characters in the series having nearly the power of *sh* in composition.

The direction relative to the Eighth series is, that it be pronounced from the back part of the mouth. This then is evidently the *h* of the English and the *h* of the Sanskrit alphabet formed into a series: the first character of which, connected so harshly as to add nothing to the vowel-finals, is the *initial* of those words in the ensuing work, and in the Chinese language, which appear to begin with a vowel. The second is a very moderate aspirate: the third is more feeble, and though written *y-a*, has the power of *a*, being the initial of those characters which begin with *a*, as *a-an*, formed by prefixing this initial to the *final an*. The fourth is so strong an aspirate as to resemble the *gh* of the Arabic alphabet, or the double *h* of the English.

The direction respecting the Ninth series, which contains only two characters, *l-ai* and *yue*, is, that it be pronounced, "half with the tongue and half with the upper-teeth." Happily the characters themselves assist us in understanding this direction, as *l-ai* and *y-ue* are easy of enunciation.

The comparison between the Sanskrit consonants and the Chinese initials then stands thus: The four principal Sanskrit series the Chinese have; of the

series resembles the English they are dentals; but on the other hand they have a series formed by gently closing the lips (*fa*, *fare*, &c.) of which the Sanskrit system is destitute. Of the eight unconnected consonants in the Sanskrit alphabet, the Chinese reject one, namely *r-a*, which sound their language does not possess; but instead of the three Sanskrit sibilants they have two series of sibilants, comprising ten in number. Two of the remaining four unconnected consonants, namely *h-a* and *w-a*, are included in the eighth series; and the other two, *l-a* and *y-a*, form the ninth.

That there is formed, in nine series, a system containing *thirty-six* initial powers, originally intended, no doubt, to be all completely distinct, however much they may at present be confounded. This is perhaps the most extensive consonantal system which the human intellect has produced: no alphabet of which I have heard, contains *thirty-six** consonantal powers: the Sanskrit alphabet, which exceeds every other, containing in reality only thirty-three.

It is difficult even to guess who was the author of this system, or the age in which it was invented. On first observing it, the thought occurred to the writer, that it might possibly have originated with the present dynasty, and the idea of it have been borrowed from the Tartar system of letters. But several things render this improbable: the same system is found in several dictionaries which existed long before the Imperial Dictionary was compiled: it is detailed in one of those now by me which is often quoted in the Imperial Dictionary. And indeed, on close examination, the Tartar alphabet does not appear to contain this system of

* The Siamese alphabet noted by Alexander Hamilton (Asiatic Researches, vol. v. p. 241) contains thirty-seven consonants. The Javanese alphabet, the formation of which has attracted the attention of the learned, also has consonantal powers. [illegible] the Chinese Radicals might be said to contain within them a hundred consonantal powers, in reality a very small number, but sufficient. See a valuable essay on the Languages and Literature of the Indo-Chinese nations, by J. Leyden, M. D. Asiatic Researches, Vol. x.

initials; on the contrary, it has according to Barrow,* only eleven consonantal initials. But the greatest objection to this, as well as the strongest argument for the antiquity of the system, seems to be, that this system of thirty-six consonantal initials must have entered into the *whole of the language, and been formed the basis of universal pronunciation*, prior to the Tartar Dynasty. Hence, to introduce a new system of pronunciation which should be attached to the same characters, must perhaps be attended with greater difficulties than the introduction of a new language; and is such an innovation as has scarcely been known in *any* nation, much less in China. The invention must at present therefore be left in obscurity, while the scheme itself exhibits a curious proof, both of the vast powers, and the limited nature, of the human mind: of the former, in the regularity and extent of the system, and of the latter in stopping at the monosyllabic form! How astonishing, that, with the idea of combining the characters, that of combining the sounds of these characters should never have entered the mind! An idea which seems connected with the other in the most natural and intimate manner, and which would have rendered the oral part of the language as definite and as copious as that of the characters.

Perhaps the digression would not be esteemed unpardonable, if we were to notice the degree of affinity which several other Indian alphabets bear to the Chinese system of initials. The Burman alphabet contains two series of consonants and seven unconnected letters. The latter differ but little from those of the Sanskrit alphabet; but the two series bear a strong resemblance to the Chinese system. They are indeed the *k*, *ch*, *t*, *p*, and *ts* series of the Chinese. Nor has this alphabet the two-fold *t* series of the Sanskrit, while the above con-

* See Travels in China, page 313.

sonant shews that it has the *four* sorts of the Chinese [formed by gently closing the lips.] It is also further to be remarked, that the third letter of each series, like the third in the Chinese series, differs little or nothing in pronunciation from the first; and the fourth letter in the series, or the second aspirate, is said to be scarcely ever used. Certain of these consonants have also two if not three of the Chinese *intonations*, mentioned hereafter.*

The Burman alphabet, on the contrary, seems to have a close affinity with the Sanghrit. Its five series agree exactly with that alphabet; nor has it the *four* series of the Chinese. Of the eight unconnected letters of the Sanghrit alphabet, it has six; but the abstract sound is softened so as to bear a strong resemblance to that given the Greek θ. Still however these pronunciations partake in some degree of the Chinese mode. A friend now residing at Rangoon thus writes —"The letter *gya* is pronounced like *ja* in the Burman language; and there are very few Burmans who can pronounce it at all, when it immediately follows another consonant. Hence they pronounce and write *pyatra*, a son, *pyatra*; *dwadh*, *wagu*, *kuth*, &c."

But the similarity between the Chinese system and the Tibet alphabet is particularly striking. In the "Alphabetum Tangutanum sive Tibetanum," printed at Rome, in 1773, (with which agree, a copy of the Burman alphabet brought from that country by Mr. Carey in 1795, and another which a friend brought thence a

* It may perhaps be amusing to subjoin the comparison between the Chinese and Burman Numerals. They are as follows.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
Chinese	一	二	三	四	五	六	七	八	九	十	十一	&c.
Burman	*Tit*	*nit*	*thun*	*lay*	*ngo*	*khyouk*	*khwon*	*shit*	*kou*	*tase*	*tase tit*	&c.

few months ago) that Tibet alphabet is said to contain eight series of consonants, each of which consists of four letters, except the last, which has only two.* The first four of these series appear to be the k, the ch, the t, and the p series of the Chinese; but the alphabet is also destitute of the double modification of the *t* series, and of the *p* of the Chinese system. The fifth series of this alphabet, however, Tsa, tsha, dza, is evidently the first sibilant series of the Chinese, and amidst the four other sibilants classed in the sixth and seventh series, certain vestiges of the other sibilant series may be easily traced. But the most remarkable coincidence is, that the four first series not only reject the aspirated sounds with the Chinese, but they also affix the sound of h to the third letter of the 4 series, as well as to the first: the same remark applies equally to the third letter of each of the series which they have in common with the Chinese. Indeed P. Georgius affirms, that the Tibet alphabet is among other letters, deficient in those of which the Chinese system is destitute, namely, b, d, and g.† It is evident also that they affix the *termination* of the Chinese to their letters, and that the *initial* the same.‡

Relative to this coincidence between the Sanghrit and other Indian alphabets, and the Chinese system, I do not offer any opinion. And have no system to establish, no hypothesis to support, my only wish is simply to state facts as far as they have come to my knowledge. I leave it to the learned to determine, whether the author of the Sanghrit alphabet was derived from the Chinese notions, or

* Georgius Tibetan Alphabet, p. 18.

† Alphabetum Tibetanum, p. 18.

‡ Georgius Alphabet, p. 509.

2 H 2

the latter from the former, or whether they originated independently of each other. We now proceed to,

The Sounds which constitute the FINAL powers of the CHINESE LANGUAGE.

These consist originally of twelve, which in the first vol. of the Imperial Dictionary stand as follows,

1 迦 K-ya	7 謁 k-ay (or k-ai)
1(迦 k-ya)	8(竭 k-eh)
2 訶 k-ong	9 揭 k-an (or kwan)
4 庵 k-an	10 干 k-on
5 竭 k-eh	11 鉤 k-ou
6 烏 k-oo	12 歌 k-o

These vowel and final sounds are the origin of all the finals which the Chinese language possesses. Each of these however undergoes three modifications, by which certain other final sounds are produced. The full number of finals would hence amount to forty-eight, but the deficiencies which occur in the several classes reduce the number to little more than thirty, the nature and formation of which we shall endeavour to trace.

The direction relative to these original finals is, that they be pronounced

with the mouth open; and if we attempt to pronounce each of them without closing the lips, we shall have a pretty clear idea of their sound. But each of them is also directed to be pronounced, "*by closing the mouth*," which naturally forms the remaining vowels of the European system, and furnishes a new class of finals, nearly equal in number to the former. For the sake of distinction it may not be amiss to term the original finals the *open*, and the other class the *close*, primary finals. The following table exhibits them both at one view:

迦	*k-ya*, by closing the mouth, becomes	瓜	*k-wa*
(迦	*k-y-i*)	(瓜	*k-w-i*)
同	*k-ung*	光	*k-wang*
庚	*k-ang*	工	*k-iung*
機	*k-ih*	孤	*k-oo*
高	*k-aou*		
該	*k-ay* (or *kai*)	乖	*k-way*
(機	*k-ih*)	傀	*k-wei* (or *qui*)
根	*k-en*	昆	*k-wun* or *kwun*
干	*k-an*	官	*k-wan* (or *kuan*)
鈞	*k-iu* (or *kiu*)		
歌	*k-o*	鍋	*k-wo*

By this process are nine other distinct sounds produced, which increase the number of primary finals to sixteen.

The Chinese have however refined upon this plan, and from these nineteen primary finals have deduced another class, which I know not how to characterize better than by their own term 附 *foo*, Inferior or Secondary: these are all subjoined, together with the original ones, in the following table:

One Primary finals.		Secondary finals.	
迦	K-ya	加	K-a
(迦	k-ya)*	格	k-h or kyh
冏	k-ang	江	k-ang or kyang
庚	k-ang	經	k-ing
(成	k-eh)	兼	k-ee
高	k-aou	交	k-aou or ky-aou
鼓	k-ou (or kiu)	甘	k-an
(減	k-eh)	—	
根	k-un	金	k-yun (or kyun)
干	k-un (or kan)	堅	k-yun

* This primary final y united with its secondary final h gah in the table of original syllables. It forms only four syllables, and its own primary final only three; it is in reality of the fourth diagram. Many Europeans mistake this primary final for the eighth, h-eh, which in the dictionary behind forms only four syllables.

钩	k-ou (or kou)	鸡	k-ai
欧	k-ŏ	肖	k-ăh

Class Primary finals. *Secondary finals.*

瓜	K-wa	—	
巩	(k-ŏ)	跤	k-aih
光	k-wang (or kwang)	煌	k-wăng
工	k-ung	弓	k-ung (or kyung)
孤	k-wŏ	括	k-wŏ
—		—	
非	k-wuy	—	
傀	k-wŏ	圭	kwy (or qw)
昆	k-wăn	君	kwan or k-wăn
宫	k-wŏng (or kwŏng)	涓	k-wăn
—		—	
锅	k-wŏ	翼	k-yăh

This table exhibits all the finals which the Chinese have. By putting to these the thirty-six initials already described, as many words in the language formed.

A remark or two on these may not be superfluous. Although the Chinese possess these original primary finals twelve in number, the initial and the eighth are wanting in the first class: the deficiency of the eighth arises from the nature of the sounds here, the characters occurring there, not being capable of pronunci-

stone unless by closing the mouth. That final is therefore placed in the class of close primary finals, and its place in the other class is supplied by substituting *k-th*, the fifth open primary final.

The same deficiency is observable in three instances, in the class of close primary finals, namely, in the second, the sixth, and the eleventh, the sounds which would have arisen in these instances from the open primary final, not being capable of enunciation by closing the mouth. Thus the real number of distinct sounds in these primary finals is reduced to nineteen; all of which are evidently either vowel or nasal sounds.

The specific difference between the primary and the secondary classes of the Fenglu seems to be, that the former requires the pronunciation to be more full and bold, and the latter, more rapid and delicate. That this is the case seems evident from their being both pronounced not only with the same organs (if the term may be applied to the pronunciation of vowels and nasals) but with exactly the same motion of the mouth; and also from the sound of the secondary finals being in several instances the natural effect of a rapid pronunciation of the primary ones. Thus *tye* forms *tik*: *duh* has *dut* for its secondary sound: the secondary final produced from *k-a* is *k-ul*: and that produced by *bwe* is *bpuh*. This was probably the reason why the close primary finals, *k-wa* and *k-way*, have no secondary final; there being no such sound as *k-wul* in the language, and *k-way* naturally admitting a rapid pronunciation.

Of these secondary finals some differ so little from the primary ones, as scarcely to admit of a different mode of spelling, being distinguishable from the primary finals, only by the slightness or rapidity of their pronunciation.

The MONOSYLLABLES or WORDS of the CHINESE LANGUAGE,

As given in the Imperial Dictionary.

Table I.

THE INITIALS CONTAIN TWO OR FOUR PARTS OF SPEECH.

Table II.

Table III.

Table IV.

THE INTERVALS CALLED WITH THE CLOSE SECONDARY TRIADS.

1) The end of the composition is to be found in the following measure.

2) Only being considered as a consonant note.

3) Where several intervals are given, the first (1) is the usual one in Table III, and the others are given for completeness of the study, as they may be found in the compositions of the Masters, or in their own compositions, of which the following example of the Great Master, Bach,

These Four Tables,* which are carefully copied from the first volume of the Imperial Dictionary, exhibit the Finals united with the Initials. On inspecting them the reader will observe that the Initials are placed across the head of the page, forming so many perpendicular columns; and in the right margin, which, with the Chinese, is the beginning of the page, are placed the different classes of Finals. These form with a horizontal line, under the left angle, formed by the meeting of the two lines, is placed the character formed by the union of the two sounds. The First table exhibits the class of Open Primary Finals, applied to *kan*, the fifth of which, in the right angle, exactly underneath the initial *kang*, will be found the character *kan*, a way; and in the same horizontal line, underneath the initial *p-ang*, will be found the character *p-an*, to fold. This class of finals are endowing with the fifth series of initials, i. e. those formed by gently closing the lips, not with the seventh series, or the second class of aspirants, these two series are omitted at the head of this table.

The Second Table contains the Open Secondary Finals, which are formed from the former class: an example or two of which will be sufficient to show the nature and power of the secondary finals. At the angle formed by the union of the initial *g-ee*, and the final *k-ee* or *kyn*, (derived from the primary *kang*) is found the character *gein*, a weed; underneath the initial *t-ien* or *t-in*, in the horizontal line with the same final, may be seen the character, *t-in*, first. Underneath the initial *g-ee*, in the same line with the final *k-ee*, will be found *gwei*, a vow: and underneath

* It is supposable that a good scholar, or some of my readers, the assistant Interpreters in the Court of Directors, may have a few Chinese books in their possession, which they would be willing to dispose of; and as the Chinese Dictionary, to which such books, without a regular key, are useless, is that of the Chinese given in these tables; but the reader will easily perceive that the names of the page with the prominent characters of each class are, out of several hundreds attached to a character: and though I have used a number, the primary only, I cannot recollect in what first I met with every instance recorded.

N

ti-ai, or ti-ui, the last initial of the eighth class, we the series first with k-ai or k-ui, the last of these primary finals, stands thus, or kai, to learn. The second series of initials, class, &c. is omitted in the first of the kind of this table; and also the seventh.

The Third Table exhibits the class of Class Primary Finals, which, as they are distinct from the other class, may also be termed Distinctive Finals. In the first of initials at the head of this table, the fifth series (formed by gently closing the lips) is retained; but the fourth series, (p-ang, &c. formed by strongly closing them) as omitted, as is the seventh. An example or two of these will illustrate the Table still more. Underneath the initial ch-ee, in the horizontal line proceeding from the final k-ang, is found the character ch-ang, with which at the angle formed with the same horizontal line by the initial ch-ee, is found the character ch-ee-ang: and underneath the initial ch-ih, the reverse of the former, the character ch-h-ang, here-y, as often occurring in the following work.

The Fourth Table contains the Secondary finals formed from this class of Distinctive Primary Finals. In this table the sixth and seventh series are retained, i. e. the two series of aitaleens; but the second series, beginning with h-aou, the third, beginning with ch-aou, are dropped, and both the series of labials. The omission of whole series of sounds, which occur in each of these tables, and which of course happen because the sounds which would naturally arise from them are not found in the language, (probably on account of their not coalescing with the respective classes of finals,) will enable the reader to understand more fully the nature of the different tables of finals, and serve as a clue to guide the curious in Chinese sounds closely into the exact difference in the sounds. In this table of finals, which consists only of eight, at the angle formed by the meeting of the perpendicular line

proceeding from the initial *y-ang* or *yang*, and the horizontal line proceeding from the final *k-ae*, is found the character *ae*, to, toward; which corroborates an idea observed before, namely that the initial adds little or nothing to the final vowel sounds. Underneath *y-a*, the second character of this series, on the horizontal line with the final *k-ae*, the character *wae* is found; but while in the perpendicular line with the same initial, the character *w-ang* is found opposite the final *k-ang*, opposite *k-ong*, is found *y-ang*, and opposite the final *k-ae*, the character *ae*! which plainly shews, that to some finals this initial prefixes the sound of *w*, to others that of *y*, and to others, nothing.

The number of distinct sounds which would naturally arise from the combination of these finals with each of the thirty-six initial powers, exceeds one thousand five hundred. From the preceding remarks, however, it will appear that the finals do not coalesce with every series of the initials; and it may also be perceived that the tables present many instances of arbitrary deficiency, (probably because the sound is not found in the language,) even where the class of initials does not forbid a coalescence. The real number of monosyllables actually produced therefore, stands as follows:

The union of the initials with the class of Open Primary finals, produces	238
The union of the initials with the Open Secondary finals, - - - - - -	232
The union of the initials with the Close or Derivative Primary finals, -	195
The union of the initials with the Derivative Secondary finals, - - - -	180

Thus the number of original monosyllables in the Chinese language is *eight hundred and forty-six*,* which gives the real number of words in the Chinese Language.

* The monosyllables given in the four preceding Tables exceed the number by ten or three; the other being from their two or three being inserted in the tables different initials.

Of the Sounds or Intonations affixed to the Chinese Words.

In order to remedy this defect, the ingenuity of the Chinese philologists has invented another expedient, that of varying the sound, (in reality by accent and pause,) by affixing several modes of utterance to a syllable in addition to its original sound, i. e. by adding *force* or accent to the sound when used to denote one character; *length*, when affixed to another; and *rapidity* of utterance when affixed to a third: of these variations the English reader will form some idea by considering the difference in the pronunciation of the verb to *read*, as used in the *present*, and in the *preterite* tense. These differences of sound, which are four in number, are, in the first volume of the dictionary already quoted, described as follows:

The First Sound is distinguished by the character *Ping*, or *plain*: right, level, even, moderate. The sound is also defined as being moderate and even, neither low nor high. It is an even sound, pronounced without effort, and is the proper and genuine sound of nearly six hundred of the original monosyllables, that is, of nearly three fourths of the words in the Chinese language.

The Second Sound is designated by the character *Sying*, or *rising*, which literally signifies, "above, or ascending." This sound is defined by the Chinese as being a high sound, strong, rough, and hard: perhaps the idea of the sound will be most clearly conveyed by the word *rising*, uttered with a pretty strong accent. The number of the original monosyllables of which this is the proper sound, is about one hundred and three.

The Third Sound is designated by the character *kin*, which is the character used in common to denote *going*, or *going forth*. This sound is defined as resembling the sound of weeping or sobbing, pronounced so as to be heard a great way off. *Lingdi* terms the characteristic of this period; and the pronunciation of *kin*, which is at once the symbol of the sound, and a character of this degree, will convey a tolerably correct idea of the first sound. Of the eight hundred and forty six original words or monosyllables, *three* of this degree scarcely amount to thirty.

The Fourth Sound is represented by the character *Yeh* or *yay*, which is frequently used in the following work to signify *entrance*. This sound is defined as being short, rapid, and inverted. It is totally unlike the other three, is invariably short, and lowers the original monosyllable, *tsze*, in the Fokin pronunciation from *tsze* to *ts*; in the Canton dialect, to *p*, *k*, or *t*. These three pronunciations however are not classed by the Chinese among the proper finals, being considered as the mere effect of the other finals, when pronounced in a rapid, low, and inverted manner. The pronunciation of the character *yeh* or *yay*, which is of this degree, will give a pretty close idea of this sound. The number of original syllables to which this sound belongs, is about a hundred and ten.

This fourth sound is produced in unity by only *three* of the primary finals, namely *i-ya*, the first and second, which are to elicit the sound *i-e*, or *i-et* the fifth, and *i-oo*, the twelfth; in other words the *single* and *ei* passing these finals. These furnish both the diphthongal and the nasal finals with this sound, in the manner following:

The fourth sound arising from *i-ya*, is placed underneath { the *ya* final is *ee*, and the *yeh*, *i-ee* or *i-et*.

That arising from the 5th ky-ah, underneath { the 9th, k-ang / and the 8th (ky-ah,) or rather its derivative k-ae,

That arising from the 12th, k-o, underneath { the 3d, k-ang, / the 5th, k-ae, / the 8th, k-eou, / and the 11th, k-oo.

This plainly shews us that the Chinese consider all these finals as springing from, and as being reducible to, three simple vowel sounds. It may perhaps be amusing to some to view them arranged agreeably to this mode of classification:

CHINESE FINALS.

Arranged according to the Chinese idea of their Origin.

	OPEN.				*CLOSE or DERIVATIVE.*			
	Primary.	*Secondary.*	*Primary.*	*Secondary.*	*Primary.*	*Secondary.*	*Primary.*	*Secondary.*
1st Class	K-e a	K-a	K-ay	k-ai	k-ang	k-anh	k-way	—
	k-ga	k-ah	k-ae	k-yan			k-wan	k-yan
2d Class	K-ea	k-ee	—	—	k-oo	k-ee	k-wan	k-oi
		(or k-y	k-ang	k-ing		or kia	k-wang	k-yoang
3d Class	K-o	k-yoh	k-awa	k-yawa	k-wo	k-yoh	—	—
			k-en	k-yen			—	—
			k-ang	k-yang			k-wang	k-wang
			k-an	k-yan			k-wan	k-win

The varying of the syllables by different Intonations or modes of pronunciation, seems essential to the language; and to enter deeply into the languages of the nations bordering on China, as for example into those of Tibet* and Siam. These intonations indeed form words as really different in their application as *ki* and *pang*, as any other two syllables differing from each other. Thus Gin, pronounced with the first sound, 我 designates a species of grain: the same monosyllable pronounced with the second sound, expresses the pronoun 我 I. Pronounced with the third sound, it denotes the character 俄 hungry; but pronounced with the fourth or short sound, it denotes the character *gin*, 昂 the verb to look upward. In the two following sentences every character occurs in the primary column,

英 ying	世 shi	史 shi	戶 hoo
to love,	a generation,	a deputy,	a dead person.
石 shih	示 shi	士 sze	時 shi
a stone,	to preserve,	one of the learned profession,	time, &c.

One of the upper line and three of the lower, are *Elementary* characters, which plainly evinces that the Chinese consider these modifications of pronunciation as forming words perfectly distinct: they could be under little temptation to give the same sound to three of the *Elementary* characters, when their language contains a far greater number of distinct original syllables than the whole two hundred and fourteen would have required.

* The following extract from P. Amyot's Table shows Tartar agrees in some and differs in others of the first ten of these numbers, as well as records of their pronunciation.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Tibet.	gchig	gnyis	gsum	bzhi	lnga	drug	bdun	brgyad	dgu	bcu
China.	yih	urh	san	sse	woo	lieu	tsih	pa	kieu	shi

It may be proper to remark that these four modes of varying the pronunciation, are all that the Chinese notice: the Imperial dictionary has no name for a fifth modification of sound.* But as important are these to the meaning, that when the sound of any character is varied, i. e. pronounced with the second or third sound instead of the first, in their standard works, (as for instance in the volume before us,) the variation is constantly noted by a marginal note, and the character is then used in a sense somewhat different from the original and primary sense. Nay are all these four modes of pronunciation applied to each one of the eight hundred and forty original syllables; were this the case, the number of connected words that produced would amount to nearly three thousand four hundred. The intoned sounds given in the Tables of the Imperial Dictionary, however, amount only to one thousand one hundred and seventy-six, of which nearly 650 are of the first degree; 256, of the second; 677, of the third; and 218, of the fourth, or lowest degree.

The fourth or last intonation may be observed somewhat to vary the syllable; that which is on the other three, becoming yuh, or wuh, in the fourth. This arises merely from that compression of the organs which the rapid and deep pronunciation essential to this degree requires, and which naturally causes many of these syllables to end in h, according to some; in p, t, or k, according to others. Of these latter finals, however, it has been already said, that the Chinese system takes no notice, considering them, if not as provincial variations, yet as merely the effect of the organs thus rapidly moved. The different provinces also vary in their pronunciation of this sound: Fuhkeen and some other parts being content only to aspirate h, as yuh, wuh, &c. while other provinces, as Canton, &c. carry forward the sound so as to render the k or t quite perceptible in their enunciation. This

* Some words however are distinguished by placing the four degrees after one

accounts for our difficulties between the Mandarins and the other modes of pronunciation; and also for certain words in the following work which are sometimes spelled with *l* and sometimes with *r*: this hard sound being often so obscure as scarcely to be distinguished; one Chinese also bringing out the *l* more plainly, while in the pronunciation of another, the hard sound seemed to bear a stronger resemblance to the letter *r*.

The probability is very strong that the first invention, namely the *Pleng* or even sound, is the *natural* sound of the Chinese words. It has been already remarked, that of the eight hundred and forty-six original monosyllables which these Tables contain, nearly six hundred are of this degree: it may be further added that all the words of this degree are original sounds: I do not recollect an instance wherein a word which is originally of the second, or third, or fourth sound, has the first supplied, while numerous instances occur wherein monosyllables of the first degree have the second, third, and fourth added to them. It has been already said, however, that all these oblique inventions are not added to every word originally of the first sound: in some cases the second, and in others both the second and third are wanting; and in the greater number the fourth, which is evident from the whole number of this degree amounting only to 468, of which almost half are original monosyllables.

This may perhaps enable us to form some guess respecting the Origin of these oblique sounds. On encountering a new character, the Chinese, completely ignorant of the polysyllabic system, and unable to form an idea of any sound beyond those produced from the union of the initial and final powers already described, were of course compelled to have recourse to a monosyllable already in use. To dictate

guish the new character, however, from that already expressed by the sound, they varied the word by adding to it either tone, or length, or rapidity of pronunciation. But in the language advanced, the compounds exceeded the number of monosyllables even this method, which compelled the Chinese, ignorant as they were of compounding words as well as characters, to affix exactly the same sound to a number of characters totally different in form, and often in meaning: this they might possibly do on the same principles which Dr. Watts in his Logic ingeniously assigns as giving rise to certain equivocal words in the English Language.*

The number of different sounds resulting from the application of these four modes of pronunciation to the eight hundred and forty-six original syllables, has been already stated at two thousand one hundred and seventy-eight. As this however makes but a scanty provision for so many thousand characters, Chinese ingenuity has gone one step further, and throwing these sounds together under a new form, has contrived nearly to double them by increasing them to about four thousand and fifty, which is the utmost stretch to which even the Chinese have attempted to go in diversifying these original sounds. This last modification is said by them to be effected by two methods, that of widening or narrowing the aperture of the mouth in pronouncing certain of these syllables, and that of retaining the sound longer in the mouth, or discharging it more quickly, in pronouncing some others: the effect of these last modifications however I feel unable to describe by any European sounds; and indeed the commentators in their remarks on the classical works of the Chinese, take no notice of this modification, although they note with such care the four before mentioned.

* See Watts's Logic, Chapter iv. Section viii. paragraph 2.

The whole system of the Chinese sounds then may be summed up in a few words. From thirty-six initials, united to twelve primary finals variously modified (all vowel or nasal sounds,) are produced eight hundred and forty-six original sounds or monosyllables.* These by the application of force, length, and rapidity of pronunciation, (in other words, of accent and quantity) are so modified as to form two thousand one hundred and seventy-eight sounds easily distinguishable by a Chinese ear; and these by another modification are increased to about four thousand and fifty. But even this last modification, leaving the number of sounds inadequate to the number of characters, it necessarily followed that several characters which have not the least relation to their meaning, must be designated by precisely the same sound. If we estimate the number of characters at thirty-five thousand, and divide this number by 4050, the number of sounds produced by the most refined diversifications, we still have eight characters expressed by one sound; if by 2178, the number of original syllables diversified by quantity and accent, the number will be sixteen; but if we divide this number of characters by 846, the number of simple and original monosyllables, there will be *forty-one* characters to each monosyllable. This does not however prevent a hindrance to their understanding each other as we might at first sight imagine. We have some instances of this kind in our language which give no little trouble; *bear*, to sustain, and *bear*, a wild beast: *sail*, *happy*, and a *sail*, to hoist sails; *ring*, to sound, and, *ring*, a circle, with others of this kind, create little difficulty; the context, (or the other characters,) at once determining the idea meant.

From the preceding statement we can form a pretty clear idea of the prosun-

* The number of syllables which the English alphabet produces, exceeds six hundred.

sions of the Chinese language, and may easily perceive that however diversified may be the Provincial Variations, to which the wide extent of the empire unavoidably gives rise, the standard pronunciation is founded on principles systematic, clear and determinate; and although the variety of the Intonations may elude a European ear, there is scarcely an original monosyllable which may not be expressed by the Roman alphabet. The thirty-six Initials will admit of being expressed orthoepically, though the shades of difference between some of them were almost too delicate for the coarser lines of the Roman alphabet to discriminate with exactness: the Finals, however, being all either vowel or nasal sounds, are still more easy of expression. Nor are the Intonations so difficult as some may imagine. It has been already said that the Chinese philologists divide the only four, there besides the original sound. Of these, the second, which is always strong and forcible, (and consequently long); and the fourth, or the deep and rapid guttural, distinguish themselves by their quantity alone, both from each other, and the other two. The greatest difficulty lies in distinguishing the third from the first; the length of the third sound however will ever enable an attentive ear to distinguish it from the moderate sound of the first degree, and to one who merely wishes to read the language, a nice distinction is of little importance. In the following work the Intonations are designated by small figures placed over the names of the characters, descriptive of their several degrees. It would perhaps be possible to denominate them in some degree by certain of the accentual marks used in the Greek language. Thus, as the first degree is common, (as far as I can ascertain) it might be left unnoticed; the second, as the strong sounding vowel, might be designated by the acute accent, the third by the mark used to denote a long syllable, and the fourth by the grave. As I cannot admit however that the Chinese Intonations answer exactly to the European those of accent and

quantity attached to their marks. I have preferred the mode of distinguishing them by figures. But if a European reader affix the idea of a common syllable to the characters marked 1; of the more acute accent to those marked 2; of a long syllable to those marked 3, and of a short one to those marked 4, he will feel himself greatly assisted in forming an idea of the Chinese intonations.

Although the Chinese language has but three or four intonations, a person unacquainted with the radical principles of the Chinese pronunciation, may easily imagine they are much more numerous. Between the three or four initials of each series, the aspirate attached to the second, forms the only perceptible difference. Thus there are twelve sounds which a European would imagine to be substantially the same; and when we recollect that to each of these must be attached, at least six, or seven different characters, it will easily occur to the mind, that a European who should hear a native express a hundred and sixty-two characters apparently by the same word, might easily imagine he perceived twenty or thirty intonations among them, although a more accurate acquaintance with the principles of Chinese pronunciation might enable him to reduce all these to the four standard intonations of the Chinese. This remark may probably apply to the languages of some of the nations bordering on the Chinese, which are said to contain as great a variety of intonations.

The detailed view of the Chinese system here given, may enable us also to understand the nature of what is termed the Mandarine or Court-language, which seems indeed nothing more than a different and more correct pronunciation of the characters, accompanied with what is naturally the case in all literary circles, a

more liberal and copious introduction of them into common discourse. The directions given for the formation of the various series of initials, and the different classes of finals, if not originally laid down, were at least revised by Mandarins, namely the chief officers of state, whose names, to the amount of nearly a hundred, stand in the first vol. of the Imperial dictionary. Now these, from the Chinese mode of choosing the officers of state out of those most eminent in literature, would at once compose the court of the Emperor, and the first circles of literary resort. Hence the plain and simple rules laid down in this dictionary for pronouncing the various classes of consonants, vowels, and tones, form the principles on which the exact pronunciation is founded, and furnish a key to the accurate and precise pronunciation of the language.

But on perusing the Tables in the Imperial dictionary, which contain all the words in the language both in their original and contracted form, a train of reflections will be ready to ask, "What are the eight hundred and forty-six characters which express the original monosyllables, or even the two thousand which express them contracted, to the study of the characters? As sounds cannot be conveyed to the eye, and the sounds of the characters are unconnected with each other, if there be only thirty thousand characters, the study of at least twenty-eight thousand must be left undefined still." Perhaps the more intelligent mind may spontaneously suggest the remedy for this, namely, that as the formation of all the syllables in the language is thus accurately described, and their connections defined, the Chinese had only to affix one of the defined characters to each of the characters in the dictionary, in order to ascertain with complete precision the pronunciation of every character in the language. This is exactly the plan which the Chinese philologists have adopted. Were we, for example, in the course of

reading to meet with the character 忠 (faithful) of the name of which we are supposed to be ignorant: on turning, in the Imperial dictionary, to the key or the *heart*, we should find this character among those which consist of four additional strokes, and underneath it *chŏ* and *chŭng* given as the two characters, from which the sound of it is to be formed. These form *chŭng*; but the sound should be *chŏng*, it is added underneath, "harmonizing in sound with *chŭng*," which latter character we may find in the fourth table of unwonted sounds, at the angle formed by the initial *chŏ* and the secondary final *h-ung*. Now the characters, and the two which formed the syllable sound, are among the *two thousand unwonted characters*, and may be easily found there underneath their respective initials and finals. Thus then, by means of these two thousand characters, the formation of the name and intonation of which are clearly laid down in the Imperial Dictionary, is the pronunciation of every character in the dictionary fixed in so clear a manner, that any one in Britain who is master of the system here given, may ascertain the sound of each character as really as though he were at Pekin: as one residing in China who possesses Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary, and understands the scheme of pronunciation laid down therein, may ascertain the exact pronunciation of any English word.

Relative to Provincial Variations, they will of course be many, and will in some instances differ widely from each other; as do indeed the dialects of the different counties in England. Of these the most important to an Englishman is the dialect of Canton, as being that with which our countrymen have the greatest occasion to be conversant. For this, among other reasons, I have in numerous instances preferred the Canton dialect in spelling the Chinese words, as that which would enable our countrymen to bring the Chinese words into most use

dixie ne.* The following are the principal things wherein this and the Mandarin pronunciation differ. Relative to the Initials, the first three characters of the two series of sibilants are pronounced in the province of Canton as though they were of the *ch* series; hence several words in the following work are spelled with *ch* which some others spell with *ts*; as *che* instead of *tse*, &c. It is curious however that they in this province affix sibilant vowels to the two remaining characters of each sibilant series without hesitation. In the Finals the points of difference are more numerous. The chief are those following:

Kya they pronounce	ka	Ken	kun
Kang	kong	ken	kan
Kuen	kun	kwang	kwong
Kay	kai	kwen	kwun
Kin	kan	kwan	qui

These are the principal points of difference in the Canton dialect; and by recollecting them any one may easily recognize any word in the ensuing work in the Mandarin pronunciation.

* It is necessary to observe, that most of this volume was printed off before I became acquainted with the System of Pronunciation laid down in the Imperial Dictionary. Hence I am at times compelled to spell by the ear; and those acquainted with Chinese will easily perceive the mistakes thereby occasioned. But whatever imperfections such mistakes may unavoidably occasion to every learner, such a person has no other guide than the ear.

We now proceed to the Third part of this Dissertation, namely,

REMARKS ON THE GRAMMATICAL CONSTRUCTION OF THE CHINESE LANGUAGE.

In this part I am constrained to be much more brief than I intended, as the other two parts have swelled so much beyond my expectation. Indeed brevity on this part seems dictated by propriety; for, as the Chinese have no idea of Grammar themselves, no assistance can be derived in this department from any treatises of theirs on the subject. A deep and extensive acquaintance with their classical works therefore, is the only basis on which grammatical principles can be founded; and till this acquaintance be obtained, which must of course require a series of years, the only step which can be taken, is that of offering a few grammatical remarks, supported by quotations from works of approved authority, that succeeding writers may have an opportunity of investigating them, and of adding to the mass of general knowledge, by either correcting or enlarging them on the more authentic. This method I wish to adopt, particularly as the whole is an untried ground, having been unable to obtain a sight of any sketch of Chinese grammar given to the characters; and, indeed, there, the sounds expressed in Roman letters are but of little service, as they may apply equally to so many different characters.

As the words of the Chinese language are expressed by Characters instead of Letters, a degree of surprise has been excited in many writers on its grammar, The

part is, that although this language, as well as others, is necessarily composed of words or characters which signify things, of others which denote qualities, and of others denoting relations between words, as well as of characters which connect words and sentences, the Chinese have no idea of grammar, nor do they seem to have any terms of this kind. Yet it is natural to suppose, that in a country where a language has been preserved inviolate, and cultivated with such care, for so many ages, and where learning is almost the *only* road to preferment, there must exist a certain fixed mode of expression which is considered as the standard of style, and the slightest deviation from which must be readily perceived, and regarded as uncouth and improper. Such must have been the case both in the Greek and Latin languages, where purity of style, and elegance of composition, preceded, and probably gave birth to, the rules of grammar. That this was the case with regard to the English language, is a fact attested not only by the writings of Bacon, Hooker, and Milton, but by those of Addison and Pope, who could derive little or no assistance from the grammatical labors of their countrymen, as, prior to Lowth's, scarcely any English grammar existed which deserved the name. This may therefore remove our surprise at the silence of the Chinese writers on the subject of grammar, as well as lead us to suppose, that their language and writings at this period, furnish ample materials for composing such a grammar as shall fully lay open the nature of the language to those who may esteem it worthy of acquisition. A work of this nature, however, where the usage of every word remains to be ascertained, as any nothing of it can fall within the limits of a brief dissertation, seems indispensably to require an extensive and thorough acquaintance with those Chinese writings which are esteemed models of style, in order to its being executed with any degree of precision. With such models of style the Chinese are indeed abundantly furnished, and among these the following work, and the other volumes of Confucius, hold a distinguished

plan: the concurrent testimony of various authors seems also to intimate, that the plan adopted in China for forming the student to a proper style is, (the same indeed with that pursued with the youths studying this language at Serampore,) that of causing the pupil to commit to memory, and constantly repeat, the works of Confucius and the most ancient sages. This method of acquiring the style of a language in which no grammar exists, will not appear preposterous to those who recollect the effect which Demosthenes's copying Thucydides eight times with his own hand had in forming his style; or the advice which Johnson gave to one desirous of attaining eminence in English style, namely, that "he should give his days and nights to Addison."

In the brief hints about to be given here relative to the Grammar of the Chinese Language, I must, for the reasons already given, entreat the reader's permission to confine myself principally to examples furnished by the following work, and to throw those few hints which refer chiefly to the colloquial part of the language into notes at the foot of the page; as well as to give these examples in their proper characters. A mode the latter, which I am induced to adopt, partly from the difficulty of identifying the characters in any other way, in a language where many characters, different in meaning, have exactly the same sound, and where those very names are variously written by different authors; and partly from a wish to enable succeeding writers to examine the grammatical positions laid down, and correct them as far as they shall be found erroneous. Nor do I greatly fear that the candid will feel displeased with the confined view of the subject, and the fewness of the examples, which only one work may afford: on the contrary, I feel persuaded that such will concur with me in thinking, that one fact, clearly established on legitimate authority, is a greater addition to the general stock of knowledge, than a great number of mere theoretic speculations.

Should it be objected that the style of this ancient work must necessarily differ widely from that of modern works; it may be replied, that the fact ascertained by different writers, namely, of these ancient works being the model on which every Chinese scholar who expects advancement, is required to form his style, must as naturally influence their style as the study of Cæsar and Cicero in some degree affects the style of every modern scholar who studies to any thing like excellence in Latin composition. That the style and manner of construction observable in the works of Confucius are not materially different from the modern Chinese style, is evident also from the Commentaries on these works, two of which on the present work I have had an opportunity of examining; one of them, which was compiled by Chu-hee, is four times as large as the original work, and by a remark of the author, appears to have been written 1300 years after the death of Confucius: the other, still more copious, is of more modern date; it is, however, highly perspicuous, and is said by my Chinese assistants to be quite a model of familiar style. The difference in style between this and the original text lies principally in the conciseness and brevity of the latter; the mode of construction being nearly the same. Indeed whatever I have found at fault of the language, tends to convince me, that it is culpably the same, whether exhibited in the concinnous and solemnity of the ancient Chinese sages; the easy and copious style of the modern writers, or the familiarity of conversation; with this exception, that a very great proportion of words found in the higher Chinese works are seldom or never introduced into conversation, and in the latter a few words are to be found which have no character; as some few words may be found in certain of the provincial dialects in England, which are seldom seen in writing.

Strictly speaking, a Chinese character is indivisible: being, as has been alrea-

ly observed, destitute of number, case, and gender; of person, voice and mood. If it be asked, How are these expressed? or, is the language destitute of these modifications common to every language on earth besides? it may be asked in reply, How do they exist in the English language, which, in the substantive, has only one variation to express the numbers even of the noun; and in the verb as est, only three to express the two hundred and fourteen variations of the verb? To this it will be replied, The deficiency is supplied by the addition of other words, termed auxiliaries. I answer, the case is precisely the same with the Chinese, which we now proceed to consider.

SUBSTANTIVE.

The reader will find in the course of this work a number of characters which are real and proper substantives, such as the characters for man, horse, dog, rain, mountain, and a variety of others. A number of others he will find however which are occasionally used as verbs; such are those which signify the passions and emotions of the mind, love, joy, hope, fear, &c.; these without undergoing any alteration, are used either as substantives or verbs, the sense and connexion alone determining in which sense they are to be understood. Such indeed is the case with many English words; as *to hope*, *my hope*: *to present*; *the present*, &c.

Relative to Number, little remains to be found in those languages which, like

* Among 214 characters, each of which is capable of being used as a verb, the 1st and 2d person singular, or any one tense with its only two substantives.

the Chinese, are remarkable for simplicity. The number seems to be ascertained in no other way than by the connexion, or by using a numeral adjective.*

Thus we find page 46

3 行 hang 1 三 san
2 人 jin

"Three men walking."

And again, page 47 a, the sage vindicating himself from the charge of rustic, says "I do not act a choul sequesting ——

2 子 tsu 1 二 gnie
3 三 san

—— "Two or three disciples."

The case seems to be the same with those substantives which from their nature must be of the master gender. The sage speaking, page 47, of a son's not succeeding from his father's way, has this expression

3 無 wu 1 三 san
4 改 kay 2 年 nin

—— "In three years not succeeding."

* In accordance with this mode of composition of the lower kind, the character 們 men is distinguishable from the plural 等 teng. This will be noticed under the Pronoun, to which it more properly applies.

Tien-chu, page 133, he says, when reproving the extravagant pride of Solon,

3 庭 ting 3 舞 woo 1 八 Pa

4 於 yu 3 門 mun

"Eight bands playing in the palace!"

In a language where the adjective suffers no alteration, Canton can have but little place any further than is connected by the nature of the substantive. Confucius however, in one instance, seems to vary the gender by prefixing the character for to that which denotes man. In Canton page 532, where he says,

1 九 kiu 2 人 yan 1 奇 ki

1 人 yan 3 爲 wi 4 婦 foo

"Yaou had (for ministers) a woman, and nine men."

---

* Translate 男 nan, a male, and 女 neu, a female, nan, by comparing two gradients in pairs, male, female to mark the gender: thus

男 nan 人 yan 女 neu 人 yan 男 nan 子 tsze 女 neu 子 tsze

Translate 牯 koo, and 牸 tsze as affixed to the generic names of animals for the same purpose.

馬 ma 牡 moo 馬 ma 牸 tsze 羊 yang 牡 moo 羊 yang 牸 tsze

These terms, although sometimes used in familiar conversation, do not occur in the literary style.

Relative to Case, however, the Chinese are by no means at a loss! although the character itself undergoes no alteration, they have certain prepositive characters which amply supply the deficiency, as may be seen by the following list:

Nominative, —

Genitive, 之 *this.*

Dative, 於 *to, to, for;* 于 *id, the same in some cases* 與 *to.*

Accusative, —

Vocative, 嗚 *o!*

Ablative, 同 *along, with,* 從 *along, from, &c.*

與 *, with,* 自 *this, from, &c.*

Examples of all which occur in the following work. We are not however to expect that these will in every instance answer with perfect precision to the cases, &c. in European grammar. In so singular a language, which has probably existed these three thousand years without being subjected to rules of grammar, to meet with something which approaches nearly to our Western ideas of case, mode, tense, &c. is as much as we might to expect; and perhaps as much as we can really find without distorting the language.

As the Nominative occurs in almost every sentence, many examples of it would be perfectly superfluous: one may suffice; it occurs in the first sentence of this volume.

3 學 hŏk 4 子 Chu*
1 曰 ewt

"Chu (or Confucius) says, learn."

The Possessive case is precisely expressed by the character 之 chee (ze). Of this, numerous examples occur in the following work: one may be seen in a sentence already quoted page 47, signifying a dutiful son's conversation—

3 之 chee 1 於 Yu
1 道 taou 2 父 foo

—"From his father's way."

And another in page 544:

3 之 chee 周 Chou
4 才 tsae 公 kung

"Chou-kung's ability."

*It may not be improper to observe, that the whole of pointing over the words in any line relates to the characters intended to exemplify the rules, are put in Italics, as well as the corresponding English words. To avoid perplexity also, the examples cited from the following work are quoted exactly as given there, and the Italic figures used to denote the first accompanying number, as referring to the examples in the work itself, and not to any former.

But although this character has undoubtedly a genitive sense in many passages, particularly where it occurs between two substantives, many other passages occur in this book, in which it seems impossible to render it thus, or indeed to consider it in any other light than that of a mere expletive. This use of certain characters merely as expletives, seems one of the greatest difficulties in Chinese syntax, as we shall have further occasion to notice.*

The Dative case is often expressed by the character 於 *Yú*, to, toward, unto; as in page 234, where the sage characterizes the low man as being one who is

2 利 *le* 1 放 *Fwang*

3 於 *yú*

= Attached to profit."

While, page 58, he describes a good man, as being

2 言 *yán* 1 禍 *hwang*

3 於 *yú*

= Attentive to his word."

* The personal particle 个 *ko*, a common root in Sanscrit as a genitive particle; as, *gunka*, "mine" A fact very frequently observed in this volume.

Although chi is generally the word in which this character is used, several passages occur in which it seems rather to agree with the prepositions at or in; as in page 41:

1 是 she 2 至 Chee
3 那 nang 4 於 e

"Arrived in that country."

And certain passages are to be met with in which it seems to have the force of the prepositions *from* or *of*, as in that already quoted page 1xxiii:

1 之 chee 2 於 e 3 無 Mou
4 道 tao 5 父 foo 6 改 Hoey

"Not swerving *from* the father's way."

In page 462 also, *Ly-kong*, a mandarin not friendly to virtue, is represented as having——

1 子 Chee 2 子 chee 3 問 Wan
4 路 loo 5 於 e 6 孔 Koong

——"Enquired of Chee-loo (respecting) Koong-chee."

Kú in page 381, it occurs in nearly the same case, where the sage is described as being,—

—"*Afraid of* (the men of) *Kúang*."

于 *Yú* seems to be exactly the same with 於 *yú*. But the character 與 *Yu*, although sometimes used in a dative case, answers much more frequently to the preposition *with*: for which reason it is referred to the ablative.

The Accusative case, as in English, differs from the nominative only by its position, or the connection in which it stands. Many examples occur, in which the accusative follows the verb, as in page 418, where the sage encouraging his pupils, says,

"I sought *perfect virtue*."

In the following sentence also, occurring page 483, the accusative follows the verb:

"Does Chúh-kúng understand *propriety*?"

The accusative however does not always retain this position; for in the following complaint of the rose, which we meet with page 477. we find the object or accusative case preceding the verb:

1 兒 kin 5 得 teh 2 吾 woo 4 善 shen
6 所 soo 3 不 poo 5 人 jin

"*A rose of real virtue I am not able to be beheld!*"

Here indeed the insertion of the nominative case, woo, removes all ambiguity; but this mode of construction is not much used in conversation.

The character 呼 hoo, is said to be used as a Vocative particle in conversation, and sometimes in writing; but I have not met with it in this work, nor in the commentators. When used, it precedes the substantive. The Vocative is generally formed by the mere mention of the name, of which an instance occurs page 89 (quoted within) where Confucius says, "Yaou, (to me instruct thee wherein consists knowledge."

The signs of the Ablative are expressed with great accuracy. The fact is, however, that though natives almost affect to adopt the names of the Latin cases, for the sake of being understood, they have as little to do with the Chinese substantives, as they have with the English, save they admit of no inflection. The Chinese are in reality more accurate; they have characters to express those distinct positions of the substantive, from, with, &c; but it is evident that only the first of these is ablative. They might with more propriety be said to express the Ablative, the Instrumental, and the Locative cases of the Sanskrit. The proper

ablative sense expressed by *chong*, (tsung) the primary meaning of which is, to follow, to imitate, and sometimes to flow from or out of. From this last idea, the ablative sense seems to be borrowed.* Thus page 83, the sage, speaking of the state of his mind when arrived at the age of seventy, says,

1 矩 kue 2 不 pŭt 3 所 so 4 從 Chong

5 踰 yu 6 欲 yŭh 7 心 sin

"The desires which *proceeded from* (my) heart transgressed not the rule."

In this sense however, this character occurs but seldom in this work, and still more seldom in conversation. The character 自 *tsze*, also, which generally denotes *self*, is sometimes used as an ablative particle. In page 8, the sage says,

1 方 fang 2 自 tsze 3 有 Yew

4 來 lae 5 遠 yuen 6 朋 pung

"Having a friend come *from* a distant part."

With is often expressed by the character 與 *yu*, already mentioned under the Dative case. Thus page 99, Confucius says,

* This seems to favor the doctrine of Horne Tooke relative to English prepositions, &c. which may probably receive further illustration from deeper researches into the genius of the language.

終 chung 日 jih 言 yen

與 yu

"I converse with him the whole day."

In one instance however, this character seems really to answer to our conjunction, and; namely in page 425, where the sage says,

有 yau 與 yu 雖 sui

是 shi 爾 urh 我 wo

"Only I and thou have this disposition."

With is also expressed by the character *tung*, as *tung t'a*, "with him." It occurs but seldom in the text of this work, but is very frequently used by the commentators, as well as in conversation. Thus *tung ge k'e*; literally, "with me go," is a phrase often used.

As is expressed by the character 中 *chung*, as in works. Confucius, page 118, after exhorting his people to pursue learning for the sake of improving their minds and regulating their conduct, adds,

是 shi 其 k'i 祿 lu

中 chung 在 tsai

"An imperial salary is in this."

And page 157, meeting the interview of Koung-tzu-chaung, he says,

1 之 che 2 縲 lei 3 雖 sui
4 中 chaung 5 紲 chi 6 在 tsai

"Though he was in confinement."

Another is more minute: page 741, in the following remark on the sage's carriage:

1 頗 kiue 2 不 pou 3 車 kiue
4 內 nui 5 中 chaung

"(Seated) in a carriage he did not gaze carelessly around."

Several other prepositive characters might be enumerated; but these examples are sufficient to evince, that, however ignorant the Chinese seem to be of grammar, their language is by no means void of characters to express that most important part of it, the relation which one substantive bears to another.

ADJECTIVES.

Little requires to be said concerning Adjectives. In Chinese they have neither number, case, nor gender; and are generally placed before the substantive. In the present volume phrases often occur equivalent to the following:

1 大 ta 2 小 siu
3 車 che 4 車 kiue

"A great carriage." "A small carriage."

In the Comparison of Adjectives, the simplicity of the Chinese language greatly resembles that of the Hebrew. The character *ko*, 過 (or *kwo*)* *to pass beyond, &c.* is generally used to express the Comparative Degree of superiority, and two instances of its use occurs in this volume. It is in page 272, where the sage, speaking of *Yaou* or *Chou-lae*, one of his people, says,

過 kwo　　好 hou

我 ngo　　舜 shung

"He is more vehement than I." literally, "Vehement *beyond* me."

Similar *any* terms are to be found of the Superlative degree. In conversation, natives often use their highest exaggeration; as, *mo-tay*; this however is more properly "very great," than greatest. In composition the character *tae* 甚 *(tai)* *Exceeding, great, &c.* is said to be used in a superlative sense, but I cannot at present recollect any instance of its being thus used in this volume.

PRONOUNS.

The Pronouns in the Chinese language are extremely simple. In these however the language is by no means deficient: characters may be found in this work which nearly answer to the Personal, Demonstrative, Relative, and Interrogative Pronouns of the English language. Neither are used in their first words, they are of all numbers, and all genders.

* The reader may perhaps wonder that I do not here mention transposing the [illegible] of this observation. This is a further consideration with those Tartar-Chinese [illegible] particles &c.

The PERSONAL PRONOUNS are marked with great accuracy; and are as follows:

我 Gŏ, I. 爾 Gnĕ, thou 他 T'â, he, she, or it.

The Cases of these pronouns are formed by the prepositive characters already described as forming the cases of the substantives, the pronominal characters themselves undergoing no change; which will sufficiently appear by an example. Thus, page 83, Confucius says,

1我 Gŏ 2孝 hiaou 3孟 Mang
4對 toui 5於 yu 6孫 soun
7曰 wĕ 8我 Gŏ 9問 wun

"Mang-soun enquired of me (respecting) filial veneration. I reply-ing said."

Here the same character occurs both in the nominative and the oblique cases. Nor, in the Accusative case, do the pronouns either suffer any change, or require a prepositive character. In p. 293, the says, expressing his determination to embark on the sea on account of his instructions being disregarded, says,

1由 Yaou 2者 chĕa 3從 chŏung
4與 yu 5其 khe 6我 Gŏ

He (who will) follow me is that Yaou.

And, page 252, Chee-keung is introduced as saying,

1 無 woo	2 也 yu	3 之 chee	4 我 Goo
11 加 kea	10 吾 ung	6 加 kea	8 不 put
13 請 chee	11 亦 yuk	7 施 chee	9 欲 yuk
16 人 run	12 欲 yuk	8 我 goo	4 人 run

"I desire not men to injure me, nor do I desire to injure men."

By these examples it is evident that the accusative case, as in English, differs from the nominative only by its position.

Beside Goo, two other characters, 吾 *Ung* and 予 *Yu*, are often used to express the pronoun I. *Ung* is used by Confucius perhaps more frequently than *goo*, but is exactly the same meaning. It is by some said to convey a plural idea; in the preceding example however, it is evidently used in the singular number, which the reader will find to be the case in conversation rather to govern in the present instance. The preceding examples, in which it has so often occurred, render any further illustration of it unnecessary.

予 *Yu* also occurs in several instances for the pronoun I. First meeting with it in the oblique case, I imagined it might be used only as the oblique case of that pronoun. The example occurs page 479——

5 予 yu	3 德 tuk	1 天 Tien
	4 於 yu	2 主 ung

"Heaven has implanted integrity within me."

But in page 363, where *Mo-wang*, the first Emperor of the Chou dynasty, is introduced saying,

3 十 *sup* 1 亂 *lin* 4 予 *Yu*

6 人 *ren* 4 臣 *sin* 2 有 *yew*

"I have ministers fit for criminal affairs, ten persons;"

I found it used also as a nominative. The reader is therefore desired to correct the mistake in page 430, relative to its being used in the objective case alone.

The second personal pronoun is expressed in a few instances in this volume by the character 女, which properly signifies a female. In page 124, Confucius, addressing *Che-lu*, says,

1 之 *chee* 2 女 *koo* 1 由 *Yew*

6 乎 *hoo* 4 知 *chee* 2 誨 *hwuy*

"*Yew*, let me instruct *thee* (wherein consists) knowledge;"

And, page 131, the sage, speaking to *Nin yuu* respecting *Quee*, a silly and haughty musician, says,

3 與 *yu* 3 龍 *mung* 1 女 *Nin*

4 救 *kew* 3 弗 *fut*

"Art *thou* able to reclaim him?"

The third personal pronoun is often expressed by the character 伊 *ee*. Although it does not occur in the text of this volume, it is often met with in the

sentence. But the character 其 *kee*, though sometimes used as a demonstrative, and often as a relative, is frequently met with as supplying the place of the third personal pronoun. Thus, page 311 the sage, extolling Chun, the founder of the dynasty of that name, whose conduct he, in several passages, declares that he had proposed as a model for his own; after praising him for faithfully adhering to his sovereign, when, possessing two thirds of the empire, he might have dethroned him with ease, adds

1 德 *tuh*	2 謂 *wei*	3 其 *kee*
4 也 *yay*	5 至 *che*	6 可 *ko*

"*He* may be said to have attained perfect virtue."

Many other examples of this use of the word might be adduced, were it not for swelling the size of this dissertation already too long. In perusing the work, however, the reader's own observation will fully supply every deficiency of the kind.

The Plural Number of these pronouns is often expressed in conversation by the character 們 *mun*, as,

我 *woo* 們 *mun* } We	爾 *urh* 們 *mun* } Ye	他 *tha* 們 *mun* } They

By compound characters 的 is used in the same sense, as 我的 *woo tih*, &c. The chief principal difference between 的 and 其 is, that the former is more frequently a genitive particle, and 其 is rather my than mine. The character 等 is more commonly used in familiar compositions, to form the plural, than either of the above; as 我等 *woo tung*, &c. &c. The fact however is, that in their most ancient compositions, no particle is added

to form the plural: the reader will perceive that reading of this nature occurs throughout the following volume, the pronominal characters being of all genders, as well as of all genders.

It ought further to be observed also, that although in some instances the character 之 che is added to a pronoun to form the possessive, many passages occur in which the pronominal characters above mentioned, evidently express a possessive sense of themselves. Page 318, Confucius, being in the Chinese country, thus addresses his pupils:

1 之 che	4 與 yu	7 歸 Kui
2 小 siao	5 吾 ou	8 矣 y
3 子 tche	6 黨 tang	9 歸 kui

"Return home, return home, my company of little ones."

爾 Eul, thou seems also used as a possessive in page 330. The sage, advising one of his pupils who was in a place of trust, not to reject the allowance of grain attached to his office, says,

1 當 tang	里 lin	3 爾 eul	4 以 I
5 與 lin	6 鄰 lyang	7 鄉 hiang	8 與 yu

"Use it for thy hamlets, villages, cities, and towns."

Kie occurs as a possessive in numerous instances: Confucius, speaking, page 337, of Kong-ye-chang, who had been in confinement, says

3 據 these　1 許 I-sze
4 也 yay　5 其 kee

"False was his accusation" (i. e. that brought against him).

And page 47, giving directions how to frame filial piety, after directing that, in his father's life time, the son's desires should be observed, adds,

3 行 hang　2 觀 kwan　1 父 foo
4 其 kee　5 沒 mŏŏt

"The father being dead, observe his conduct."

The following example exhibits also a plural pronoun, which we have not before mentioned, that these pronouns denote either the singular or the plural, as the connexion may require. In page 418, the sage, telling his pupils, that, in his first intercourse with men, he heard their professions, and gave them credit for their conduct, adds,

10 觀 kwan　7 其 kee　4 人 yun　1 今 kin
11 其 kee　8 言 yen　3 也 yay　6 吾 ung
12 行 hang　9 而 yun　6 聽 thing　2 於 yu

"Now, respecting men, I hear their professions, and observe their conduct."

In this manner 其 *Her* denote even as the possessive plural. More examples would be superfluous. We proceed to the

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS.

Of this class the Chinese have several characters, as

Ssu 斯 *this* | *Pi* 彼 *that*
Tsze 此 *this* | *Ki* 其 *that*
Shi 是 *this* | *Fei* 彼 *that*

All these admit of being used with substantives of every gender.

斯 *Ssu* is often used in this volume. Thus page speaking, page 50, of benignity, says,

子 *tsze* 黃 *hwan* 帝 *te* 斯 *ssu* 一 *yih* 之 *chih* 謀 *mow* 而 *urh* 天 *teen* 下 *hea* 治 *che* 王 *wang*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

"Of the first emperor's conduct this formed the excellence."

此 *Tsze, (tse)* scarcely occurs once in the text of this volume; but is often met with in the comment, and in conversation; it is written the same as with the former.

是 *Shi* is often used in the sense of the substantive verb, is. Some passages occur however, in which it is impossible to render it by the substantive verb; as in page 213, where the sage, describing the attachment of the honorable man to virtue, says,

11 是 shé 7 願 yuén 4 於 yú 1 造 tsáo
9 必 pé 2 是 shé 6 次 tsé
9 於 yú 6 沛 pé 3 必 pé

"In small difficulties he will adhere to this;—in deep adversity to this will he adhere."

他 T'a, although a personal pronoun, is sometimes used as a demonstrative. An instance occurs in page 309:

4 邦 pāng 3 他 t'a 4 於 yú 1 至 chè

"Arriving at that country."

其 K'e, is also used as a demonstrative, or nearly the same meaning. But although in many passages this will best be thus rendered, a few cases in the work in which it occurs seem to have the force of the definite article, the. The appears to be the case in a sentence occurring page 438, where the sage, observing that, were he from three men walking, as these a master, says,

7 之 chē* 2 而 urh 8 善 shen 4 擇 chǎ
6 從 chung 4 者 chē 3 其 ke

"Select the virtuous man, and follow him."

* 之 (chē) is placed after the verb chosen, always possibly not to express its particular use, simply more than in the case of the third personal pronoun. The use of my Chinese assistant says, [illegible]

In many passages however, it is difficult to say which rendering will best suit the connexion. Indeed as few characters occur so often as *Hoo*, there are few the meaning of which is more difficult, in all cases, exactly to define.

之 *Tse*, is perhaps more commonly used in familiar writing than either of the others, but it has not occurred as a demonstrative in the text of this volume, although it is frequently to be met with in the commentaries.*

RELATIVE PRONOUNS.

The characters chiefly used in a relative sense are 所 *so*, who or what; and 其 *ke*. The former seldom admits of being used as a possessive *affixative*; and, in the volume before us, is generally used in the neuter. An instance occurs, page 46, where a pupil of the sage's, speaking of his recommending the study of the Sze, the Shoo, and the Ly, three of the most ancient Chinese classics, says,

4言 yen 3雅 ya 2所 so 1子 Tsze

"That which Tsze constantly recommended, (was)."

Another instance occurs in a sentence already quoted, page lxxvii. to which the reader can easily turn for the characters:

"The desires which proceeded from (my) heart, transgressed not the rule."

and placed in the succeeding volumes, the student will find it easier to connect passages where it seems difficult to give a very close signification.

* *Ke* is often used for the possessive, though without reference to the 1st pers. this way; *Tsze* as 1st pers. the reverse, and *Ke* to third or neuter pers. etc. *Ke* is also used for the demonstrative *that*, as neuter pers. *that one*. But these subjects are more easily learnt by reading.

其 Khe, it has been already said, is often used as a relative. When this is the case however, it generally supplies also the place of the personal pronoun; as, 其 ma, thy wife, &c. Instances of this will often occur to the reader in perusing the volume.

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS.

The Chinese have three characters which were used almost exclusively as interrogatives: they are 誰 *Sui*; 孰 *Shuh*; and 何 *Ho*.

誰 *Sui* (who) Who? is much used in this volume; and generally, to denote persons. It occurs page 433, where Cou-ho somewhat vain of his courage, asks, "When Hou-chae goes forth with an army

2 與 yu 3 誰 sui 1 則 Chuh

Who will be with him?"

孰 *Shuh* (or suh) is also used in the same sense. As we meet every day with *sui*, but rarely with *shuh*, page 194, where the sage, after exposing the silly vanity of Lou-ae, adds,

7 不 pou 4 知 chee 7 管 Kwan

8 知 chee 2 禮 le 6 氏 shé

9 禮 le 6 孰 shuh 5 可 k'ho

"If Kouan-tse understand propriety, who does not understand it?"

In page 197 it is applied to the master-grades. The sage, reproving the conduct of Tsai wo, in retaining eight bands of music in his palace, subjoins,

3 可 khŏ 4 也 yĕ 1 是 shĭ
5 忍 jĭn 2 就 tsiú 6 可 khŏ
3 也 yĕ 6 不 pŭ 5 忍 jĭn

"This he can suffer! What then can he not suffer?"

何 *Ho*, what? and sometimes how? is a character frequently used, and generally in dreary things. Pwan-keu speaking, page 83, of filial veneration, asks,

3 也 Yĕ 2 謂 wei 1 何 Ho

"What may it be termed?"

And page 93, the sage, comparing the support given to a parent, if unaccompanied by affectionate respect, with the support given to a horse or a dog, asks,

3 別 pĭĕ 1 何 Ho
4 乎 hoo 2 以 e

"What indeed is the difference?"

In several instances this character seems to have the force of the adverb how? as in the following question put by Chaukung to the sage (page 62).

1 無 mou 4 諂 tchin 7 貧 pin

2 驕 kiao 5 富 fou 8 而 eul

3 何 ho 6 而 eul 9 無 mou

"That the poor be not adulatory, and the rich not haughty, how (can it be?)"

Although these pronominal characters generally answer the meaning here affixed to them, several of them are used occasionally as mere expletives. This is sometimes the case with 而 *eul*, also will also be found to occur in many passages where it is difficult to affix to it a pronominal signification; and even 其 *ki*, the second personal pronoun, seems in certain places redundant, if it be not euphonic. This seems the case in a sentence occurring p. 474, and already alluded to, page 472, in which Confucius replies to his pupils, who had requested him to be more explicit.

1 爾 eul 2 隱 yn 4 吾 ou

3 乎 hou 5 與 yu

"I see by no means reserved."

It may seem strange that certain characters, in many instances so evidently significant, should be also used as mere expletives. The following conjecture, which is offered merely as such, may appear to some not altogether inconsiderable. In a language not fixed by grammatical accidents, custom must necessarily regulate a great

in composition; and a writer, finding *ze*, *the*, &c. used in a variety of sentences through a significant sense, might imagine the euphony of other sentences required them; in which case, their admission being forbidden by no rule of grammar, he might naturally introduce them to fill out the sentence, without affixing any particular idea to them: thereby might by degrees come to be considered in certain cases as a needful embellishment of style. On this principle we may perhaps account for a variety of those particles which occur in the best Greek compositions, to which translators find it so difficult to affix a precise meaning; as well as for many particles in English conversation, the use of which is now become common, and in some cases necessary; such are, in many instances, now, then, still, well then, &c. &c.

VERBS.

A considerable number of the Chinese words or characters are used as verbs alone; and many are used as verbs which are properly substantives; as is the case in English with hope, fear, desire, love, &c. Some few may indeed be found which perform the threefold office of verbs, substantives, and adjectives. Even these however, are not without a parallel in English: "To *present* a book;" "a handsome *present*;" and, "the *present* time," are phrases neither incorrect nor uncommon.

With the various modifications of an action, expressed in European grammars by voice, mood, tense, &c. we are scarcely to expect a perfect coincidence, in a language formed on a principle peculiar to itself, and without the least reference to grammatical rule. The fact is, that a Chinese verb, undergoing no

inflexion, has nothing whatever itself to mark either voice, mood, tense, person, or number. However much this may seem surprising relative to a Chinese verb, we may say exactly the same thing in English verbs without the least scruple: the verbs to eat, to drink, to put, &c. have only *two* variations to express all those included in voice, mood, and tense. The Chinese language however is by no means incapable of expressing those variations of action which seem so essential to speech.

The greatest deficiency in the Chinese verb lies perhaps in the Passive Voice. In the present volume the reader will perceive a number of verbs which are evidently active, and others which are neuter or intransitive, but with respect to passive verbs, P. Rhodes,* one of the earliest writers on the Chinese language, says, that it has none! The most common idea is, that the character *pe* bears the passive voice. *Pe* is however the verb to give; and, "*give pe* (he or she)" one of the examples of the Passive given by Dr. Webb, is literally, "I give (or present) him to beat." But even this form of the passive does not occur in the following volume. Hence I suspect, that it will really be found to be, that the Chinese language delights not in passives; but that certain verbs (probably all that are strictly transitive) are both active and passive, and are distinguished by the connexion alone. Nor is this lounge in the genius even of the English language: all those verbs, the imperfect tense and past participle of which agree with the present tense, i. e. all those which, like the Chinese, have no inflexion in their tenses and moods, are both active and passive, being distinguished by their connexion alone. Thus, the verb to cut is both active and passive: in the two following sentences, "He cut them off cruelly;" and, "they were cut to the heart," the verb itself undergoes no kind of alteration.

* "Passim pugnis est tortus." See P. Rhodes, page 80.

ON THE MOODS.

The various Moods or Modes of action are expressed by certain auxiliary characters with a considerable degree of accuracy; examples of most of which have already occurred in the sentences adduced to illustrate the prepositive characters and pronouns: a reference to these is therefore preferable to citing new ones, as they are in some degree already familiarized to the reader, who can easily turn to them for the particular character exemplified.

The Indicative mood, being the verb used in its plain and direct sense, requires no auxiliary to determine it. The examples already given of this use so many that it is needless to cite any one in particular.

The Imperative mood in Chinese, as in most other languages which have few inflexions, is the verb in its simplest state. An example of the second person, (perhaps the only genuine imperative,) occurs in the first sentence of this volume, quoted page [illegible],

"Chee yu, hwa."

The Potential Mood is expressed, as in English, by certain auxiliary characters; generally by 可 *ko*, can, may. An example of this may be found, page [illegible], in the sage's address to Nin-yuen respecting Queen,

"Art thou *able* to (or canst thou) reclaim him?"

And another in his observation respecting the great Yeu, whom he so much admired:

"He *may* be said to have attained perfect virtue."

In perusing this volume, the reader will also observe several other characters used, which nearly answer to those included in the potential mood in English; such as 當 tang, must or ought; and in some cases 則 tsih, will or would; although this is also used to express the Future of the Indicative.

The Subjunctive Mood is formed by prefixing to the verb, some conjunctive character, as 雖 sui, if, although; 若 joh, if, &c. An example occurs page 40, where the sage, speaking of one affectionate to his parents, faithful to his prince, constant to his friends, and sincere in his promises, adds,

雖 sui 曰 yuĕ 學 hŏh 雖 sui
之 chee 吾 woo 曰 yuĕ
學 wŏh 必 pih 未 wuy

"Though he say I am not learned, I will call him learned."

The Infinitive is of course the simple verb; and is known only by its connexion. Amongst numerous instances which the reader will observe in this volume, one is quoted in page 10, of this dissertation, in the following advice of the sage:

"Transgressing, you should not fear to return."

The verb in the Participial mood cannot also distinguished by the connexion

alone. This however does not suffice entirely, of which the last example furnishes a proof in the active participle, *transgressing*. Several other examples of a participial nature may be observed in the sentences already quoted in this dissertation. We proceed to,

THE TENSES.

These being ascertained in the indicative mood, can with ease be applied to the other moods as far as they are found in them.

The Tenses principally remarkable in Chinese are those pointed out by nature: the Present, the Past, and the Future. The Present of course requires nothing to distinguish it, as it is the verb in its common form; several examples of which may be seen in the sentences already quoted. One occurs in the following observation of the sage, quoted page lxxxvii.

"Now, respecting men, I *hear* their professions and *observe* their conduct."

To distinguish the Past, the character 了 *leaou* is often added in conversation, and in familiar compositions; as, *Gan-yaë leaou*, "I have eaten." But it does not occur once in this volume of Confucius: the past tense however is easily known by the connexion, as will appear by the following sentence already quoted page lxxxii. in which the imperfect tense can scarcely be mistaken.

"Mang-woo enquired of me respecting filial veneration. I replying, said."

And in the sage's declaration, page lxxxiii, the present perfect must evidently be understood—

"Heaven has *implanted* integrity within me."

In the Future, which could not be so readily distinguished by the connexion, the Chinese have a sufficient number of auxiliaries to mark the sense with precision. The *Simple Future*, which refers to Time alone, is generally expressed in conversation by the auxiliary 就 *chaou*, as, *Ou chaou lai*; "I will go." *Kiai chaou lai* "he will come." This sense of the auxiliary *chaou* is not found, however, in the text of this volume, but is frequently occurs in the conversations. The character 將 *chang* or *tsiang*, which is said to have nearly the same meaning, occurs page 400, where it is indeed rendered *must*, but, as the sense is evidently future it may be rendered *will*: it is in the answer of *Confucius*, when questioned whether the sage approved the conduct of the ruler of *Wy*:

2 3 1
問 *wan* 將 *chang* 吾 *Jang*

3 2 1
"I will enquire."

That sense of the Future which strongly marks Certainty or Determination, the Chinese generally express by 必 *pi*, *pih*, or 則 *tsih*. Of each, several examples may be seen in the sentences already quoted. *Pi* occurs twice page 213, where the sage is describing the attachment of the honorable man to virtue:

"In small difficulties he will adhere to this:—in deep adversity to this *will* he adhere."

Shall, *shall* though, generally used is nearly the same meaning, sometimes verges towards the *potential*. Thus in the sentence quoted, page 11.

"Transgressing you *should not* fear to return;"

If we render *yû* by the auxiliary *will*, instead of *should*, the point of the sentence will be lost.

It is scarcely necessary to add any thing respecting Number and Person. Where the former has, strictly speaking, no place, and the latter is formed by merely adding the pronoun to the verb, nothing more can be necessary than merely to say this; and, in perusing the following volume, the reader's own observation will render this almost needless. He will however observe, that in Confucius, even the pronoun is not always added; which will give him some idea of the difficulty of rendering those passages into English, in which the ellipsis of the only word by which the verb can be discriminated, compels a translator to rely entirely on his own judgment in weighing the connexion; as well as serve to abate the edge of his censure if he should observe the utmost exertion of the mind fail, in certain instances, of eliciting the exact sense of the writer.

It will be proper here to notice the Substantive Verb *to be*; a kind of verb of which many traces are found in nearly all languages, and in the Chinese among the rest. It has been already observed that the character 是 *shé* often supplies the place of this verb, or more properly of its present tense. In the commentaries on Confucius it often occurs in the sense of the verb *is*; but in the text it generally includes also the demonstratives *this*, *that*; as, *this is*, *that is*, &c.

在 *Tsay* is often used to express the past tense of the verb *to be*, as in the following sentence, quoted page 1xxx.

"Though he was in confinement."

The character 爲 *wei*, too, although generally used as a kind of gerund, will be often met with by the reader in the room of the substantive verb.

Thus then, by this very brief sketch of Chinese grammar, or more properly of the Elements of Chinese Grammar, we may easily perceive, that, however defective, in this part, the language may be deemed, it has ample means of expressing the relations which Substantives bear to each other, and to verbs:—it possesses a rich store of Pronominal characters;—and, in the Verbs, discriminates with precision the various Modes—clearly distinguishes the Past time from the Present by its accompanying circumstances—and expresses with accuracy the various meanings of the Future. The subject could have been handled with far greater copiousness, particularly that part which treats of the verbs; but the limits of a preliminary dissertation, already swelled so much beyond the original design, constrain me to leave it for the present. The succeeding volumes will however furnish sufficient opportunity for resuming it, probably with the additional advantages which may result from a farther study of the ancient Chinese works; a study which recommends so much pleasure with the labor, that it will probably never be relinquished but with life itself. At present I can only add, that the principal adverbs of negation are, 無 *woo*, 勿 *wut*, and 不 *pe*;—that, besides the purpose characters already mentioned, the Chinese have several which mark relations of place, &c. although few of them are found in this volume;—that 而 *urh*, and 亦 *yih*, and 與 *yu*, the same; and 把 *puh*, or; are the principal con-

18022

junctions; and that, beside 乎 hu, often an interrogative, the attentive reader will find in this work several conjunctive characters expressive of joy, sorrow, and surprise; as 天 ai 天 ai, how pleasant! 歎 tan, alas! &c. &c.

Of the Chinese System the sentences already quoted will enable the reader to form a pretty clear idea, which he can easily enlarge by the perusal of a few pages in the ensuing volume. Indeed, in a language the construction of which is so extremely simple, little more is requisite in order to obtain a knowledge of the System, than to peruse with attention a few pages of some approved work.

To some of my readers a brief account of the Chinese Dictionaries may not be altogether uninteresting, as it will convey some idea of the care with which the Chinese have cultivated their own language. As every reader may not however have had an opportunity of seeing a Chinese volume, it may not be amiss just to premise, that their paper being very thin, the Chinese print only on one side: this doubling the leaf with the two blank pages within, they stitch the leaves together so as to leave the folded edge of the leaf for the outer margin. On this marginal doubling are placed, the title of the book, and the number of the page; and, in the Dictionaries, the key-character, and the number of strokes of which therein in that page. In printing, as in writing, they begin at the top of the right margin, placing the characters under each other in a perpendicular line, and thus proceed to the end of the book, which of course occupies the place allotted by Europeans to the beginning. As their characters, whether simple or compound, occupy an equal space, they are extremely studious of having the same number of characters in a line, and an equal number of lines

in a page, where the same does not require it; and in this case they generally begin a new line. They introduce a great variety of size into their printing, although the characters retain the same form, there being no less than eleven varieties of size in the first volume of the Imperial dictionary. They are not fond of large volumes, the each volume of the Imperial dictionary, which is the largest of the thirty-two, contains only 144 folded leaves, or 288 pages, and the smallest of these volumes, only 68 folded leaves.

The Introduction to the Dictionary compiled by order of the emperor Kang-he informs us, that the first Dictionary which made its appearance in China was the *Kiouen* (Silkworm) a work which owed its existence to *Yeou*, a learned man, who lived under the dynasty of *Hia*, commencing, according to Du Halde, about 458 years before the Christian æra. This was followed by

	A. D.
The *Tsie-pien*, in the *Leang** dynasty, commencing	502
The *Kouang-yun* in the *Thang* dynasty, commencing	601

* These names extracted from the first volume of the Imperial Dictionary. I have carefully compared with the Synopsis compiled by Du Halde from the Chinese annals; and find them agree in succession with the dynasties of that empire given in those annals. This volume not to contain the names and the chronological dynasties mentioned by Du Halde, and are subdivided into periods, particularly in those of the succession of emperors to whom remarkable events have occurred with them. By this we ascertain the epoch in each reign here. But we cannot define any all kinds of dynasties, nations of particular emperors. Further, in examining the pre dictionary, the Chinese have divided the names of the emperors Kang-yun are only as well as the name of the dynasty (Ming.) which Kang-yun, Du Halde makes the words of the Ming dynasty. After all I must refer the reader to the division of my readers, only adding that if this be correct, and the Imperial Dictionary be the first dynasty of Du Halde, the Chinese must have begun to fix the meaning of the characters by a dictionary within 200 years after Confucius's death, and the names, as commonly quoted in the Imperial Dictionary, must be nearly two thousand years old, and probably the most ancient dictionary at present extant among any nation.

	A. D.
The *Tsih-wan* in the *Sung* dynasty, commencing in	981
The *Ching-tsih-wan* in the reign of the Emperor *Kin*, commencing	1124
The *Yuen-fun*, in the Yuen Dynasty, commencing	1280
The *Chang-yun*, in the Ming dynasty, commencing	1558

At these Dictionaries differed considerably from each other, particularly in the words which they allowed to the different characters, the Emperor *Kang-hee* (*Cang-hi*) the second of the present dynasty, in the 49th year of his reign, issued an order to his chief mandarines, to collect these dictionaries, and from them all to compile one which might form the standard both for the characters and the words. This work was completed and published in the 57th year of his reign (A. D. 1717.) In it were employed the principal men in China for learning and rank, to the amount of nearly a hundred. A brief sketch of this work will include every thing worthy of notice in the other dictionaries.

The First Volume of it begins with an introduction of twenty pages, describing the state of the language, enumerating the dictionaries already extant, and showing the necessity of a new one. This is followed by the imperial order for compiling the work, dated the 5th day of the 3d month, in the forty-ninth year of the Emperor *Kang-hee*. Then succeed four pages containing the names and degrees of the mandarines who assisted in the work. After this follows a preface of four-teen pages, pointing out the improvements, &c. made in this dictionary.

To this succeed the Elementary Characters as already given in this work: and afterward the abbreviated form of them, as used in composition. After this are

given, 62 pages of characters, the keys of which appear doubtful: these are classed under the proper key, beginning with those of one stroke and ending with those of fifty-two, the highest number in the book.* This compendium, which contains between four and five thousand characters, is perspicuous and useful in a high degree: when a person meets with a character the key of which he is unable to ascertain, he has only to count the number of strokes in the whole character, and then look for it among those, where he will seldom look in vain; many characters being placed there, the keys of which are far from being obscure. After this follows a list of those characters which nearly resemble each other, divided into three classes, the first consists of two characters nearly alike; the second, of three, and the third, of four. These are carefully discriminated from each other, as the dictionaries discriminate those words which resemble in spelling or sound. The list consists of 22 pages, and contains about 700 characters. This concludes that part of the introductory volume which relates to the Characters.

The second part of the volume treats of the Sounds. It begins with defining the nine orders of Initials, and then proceeds to the Finals: these being laid down, those Four Tables follow which have been already given in containing the Monosyllables formed by the union of the Initials and the Finals. After this succeeds a definition of the four Intonations, and then twelve tables containing all the original monosyllables intoned: a table is allotted to each final, the Open Primary final standing first in each page, then the Open Secondary final; then the Derivative or Close Primary final, and underneath all, the Close Secondary final. The number of characters thus given has been already mentioned, namely,

* This is merely for the sake of directing the reader to look for them under their respective keys; as syllables being added, &c.

ten thousand one hundred and seventy-eight. After these follow the final modifications of these monosyllables, increasing them to about four thousand and fifty, which concludes the first volume.

In the body of the work, the characters are arranged underneath their respective *Keys*, as the words in an *English Dictionary* are placed under the letters of the alphabet. The order in which these Keys or Elementary characters are placed, is the same with that observed in the Synopsis of them given in this dissertation; and the other characters, as Barrow has observed, are placed under them according to the number of additional strokes which they contain, without any regard to their meaning. The character given for explanation occupies the room of four of those which are used to explain it. Next to the proper character follows the ancient form of it, if there be any; and although the *generality* of them have none, some of them have two or three. After this the characters follow which compose the name, supported by the authority of the various ancient dictionaries already mentioned. Then the different meanings, generally quoted from the *Sih-mun* and the *Yuh-pëen*; and supported by one, two, or more classical authorities, the sentences in which the word occurs being quoted at length, with the name of the work: the following work, *Lun-yew*, is frequently quoted for this purpose, and in several instances three different sentences are selected from it under one character. After the different senses are thus given, if the character have more than one name (which is sometimes the case,) the second or third name is given, supported in the same manner. After this generally follows an analysis of the character; and a correct mode of writing it is pointed out as necessary, when such is the case. Sometimes however this analysis precedes the explanation.

At the end of the body of the characters, (which are mostly copied from the Cheng-tzu tung,)* are placed, under their respective keys, those characters which a deeper research enabled the Compilers of the Imperial Dictionary to add from ancient and approved works. These newly added characters are however placed separately, the character 增 tsang, added, being prefixed to them under each division. These characters amount to above 4500, and principally consist of abbreviated forms, the more ancient forms of the Characters, to such as agree in meaning with some of those before inserted.

Volumes thirty-one and thirty-two, the two last volumes of this dictionary, form an Appendix, collected from works of inferior authority; the former of these, consisting of 84 Chinese leaves, or 168 pages, contains such characters as are either of doubtful sound, or doubtful both in sound and meaning; there are chiefly characters improperly compounded, which are here referred to their legitimate prototypes, few of them being explained. Thus

鍮 is referred to 𨱏 tau, to tell.

㑹 to 會 hwi, to think.

and 𣏌 to 柱 chu, a pillar.

These spurious or doubtful characters amount to about 3500. The last volume, consisting of 34 leaves, contains somewhat above 1800 of these characters, which are said to deserve a place in the body of the dictionary, although not inserted.

* A Dictionary published not long before the order for compiling the Imperial Dictionary. It is principally compiled from the Cheng-tzu of that dictionary, both in the construction and in the body of the work. H 3

Thus in this dictionary are the forms, the names, and the different orders of the characters, defined and supported with a labour and precision which scarcely admit of improvement. The arrangement too is so simple and yet so perspicuous, that one totally unacquainted with the Chinese characters, may in a few hours make himself master of it with perfect ease. The only desideratum to the study of Chinese is a complete translation of this Dictionary; and in this nothing is necessary, beside merely rendering it into English in the order in which it lies; a thing, in my opinion, almost impossible for a European to alter to advantage.

It may be worth the labour to examine the real number of the Chinese characters, which by some has been stated to be sixty, by others eighty thousand; and by some said to exceed all bounds. It is not very difficult however to ascertain the actual number, as the Compilers of the Imperial Dictionary, after examining the various works extant for the old characters, those of unquestionable authority, and even those spurious and abbreviated forms of the genuine characters to which the inadvertency or carelessness of different writers had given rise, may be supposed to have left few unnoticed; as Ainsworth after inquiring on Coins, Epitaphs, and others, may be supposed to have given us nearly the whole of the Latin language. The number of characters in the Cang-chi-tsu-tsing, which the Imperial dictionary has generally followed in the order of words, is given in the introduction to that work, and may be seen under the different keys in the Synopsis. These, which evidently contain the substance of the language, amount to about thirty-one thousand, of which at least a tenth are synonymous characters. On examining the number of approved characters added by the Compilers of the Imperial Dictionary, they will be found to amount to somewhat more than one eighth, or about four thousand; of which however nearly one half are synonyms. This brings the number

of characters in the body of this dictionary to about thirty-five thousand. To these if we add those in the two last volumes, extracted from works of inferior authority, about 9000 in number, the whole will scarcely exceed forty-thousand, including synonyms, proper names, and spurious or obliterated characters. The number of effective characters in the Chinese language appears therefore to be about thirty-five thousand. That this calculation is not far from the real fact, will appear evident from considering circumstances: if the Chinese language contain forty thousand characters, the Compilers of the Imperial Dictionary, after examining all the Chinese writers which appeared worthy of notice, without being able, including the antiquated, obsolete, and abbreviated forms, to find ten thousand new characters, must have overlooked nearly twenty thousand! But that a hundred learned men, after such a laborious research, should omit a third of the language, is scarcely within the bounds of probability.

Indeed the number of pages in the twenty-nine preceding volumes, agrees with this number of characters. These contain in somewhat less than 9000 large, or 6000 small 12mo. pages, each of which contains eleven perpendicular lines, and each line twenty-four characters, if the omissions occasioned by borders, &c. be not reckoned. At one of Johnson's 400 pages, however, contains much more than three of these Chinese pages, his Dictionary of a 12mo. size, which contains nearly two thousand two hundred pages, has at least seventeen times of letter press, than this Dictionary of thirty-two volumes? The explanation of many characters occupies nearly one of these 9000 pages, and some less, even ten: if we however allow six to the average for each page, the number will be somewhere about thirty five thousand characters; which agrees with the statement already given.

A Comparison of the number of Chinese characters with that of the Words in the Greek, Latin, and English languages will not perhaps be uninteresting. Probably Scapula will give us a pretty exact idea of the real number of Greek words; and whoever will examine his false Index of them at the end of his Lexicon will find the number given to be about forty-four thousand. If we examine Ainsworth in the same manner, we shall find that, including those words which are not of classical authority, the number somewhat exceeds 35,000, exclusive of nearly 10,000 proper names, which the Chinese lexicographers have however inserted among the other characters. On a due examination of Johnson's Dictionary, the number of words will be found to be full 43,500, although Johnson is said to have omitted a great number. Thus then the number of the Chinese characters, the acquisition of which is said to require a whole life, will, on comparison, be found to fall far below the number of words in the Greek language; and (if proper names be considered) to be exceeded by those in the Latin and English languages, by nearly ten thousand.

We have now endeavoured to examine this language, which has been so long a kind of literary bugbear, in its simple and genuine form. And may it not be asked, what there is in it (beside our being as yet without the proper means) which renders the acquisition of it that tremendous thing, that nothing but the most undaunted mind, and a perseverance almost incredible, can hope to attempt with any probability of success? I grant that the language is singular in its formation, and that each compound character is composed of *significant* characters, instead of letters without meaning: but these component parts are seldom numerous, often so few that two united all of them are only two hundred and fourteen *significant*

characters compounded in various ways, and generally, if not always, with a reference to their signification. Were this not the case however, and had the figure of a door and the ear, in the character 聞 wen, to hear, no more tendency to suggest the idea of hearing, than the four (characters or) letters, h, e, a, r, the component parts of the Chinese word would still have the advantage of being only half the number of characters necessary to be retained in memory in order to recal the idea expressed by the English word hear. These compounds indeed are neither *multiplied ad infinitum*, nor *ad libitum*, as some have imagined. If the foregoing statement have any claim to accuracy, the Chinese characters or words fall far short of the number of *English* words; the whole, including proper names, and obsolete and spurious characters, scarcely exceeding *forty thousand*. It is therefore quite probable that ten thousand include the bulk of those in common use; and indeed whoever remarks how very few different characters are contained in the following volume, will be ready to conclude that five or six thousand will enable a person to read as well as converse, to a very considerable extent. Indeed were the means of selecting the uncommon words perfectly accessible to an English reader, a much less number would be sufficient to enable any one to read the Chinese classics; and how soon five thousand characters may be imprinted on the memory by a little attention, any one may learn as also who will reflect how many human countenances he can recognize without the least study or effort, although he may not be able to name them. To imprint on the memory however, a distinct idea of one human countenance, is an act of precisely the same nature with imprinting on the mind the figure of two Chinese characters. If Cyrus therefore could call every soldier by his name, in an army of a hundred thousand men, his labor in making this acquisition, although he never hit a mark

must certainly have been double that of the most learned mandarins in China; a fifth of that labor would have made Cyrus a most respectable Chinese scholar!

But if the advantage be on the side of the Chinese, respecting the *learning* of the words, it is evidently so in the article of grammar. This obstacle, so formidable, for instance, in the Sanskrit language, that a man may diligently employ himself seven years, (a period sufficient with proper helps, to bring him thoroughly acquainted with the most formidable of the Chinese writings,) and, in the mean time, have been experienced, do little more than digest the Elements of the language, would scarcely be said to exist in Chinese. If ever simplicity reigned in the grammar and construction of a language, it is in that where an acquaintance with about *thirty* prepositive and auxiliary characters, puts a man in possession of the whole grammar; and where his mostly reading with attention a few pages, will bring him acquainted with the construction. Indeed the fact is almost self-evident, from the circumstance of their having no grammar. What could induce a nation who have been *compiling* dictionary upon dictionary for perhaps these two thousand years, for the sake of elucidating the meaning of their language, to neglect compiling, in the whole of this time, a small treatise on the grammar and construction of the language,—but the persuasion that none was requisite?

If any one object to me the length of time which the Chinese student is said to be studying it, before he can pass his examinations with honor; let him consider for a moment what is the object of acquisition to these Chinese students? Not the mere acquisition of the language, but, of a copious and elegant style. Were this however made the criterion of proficiency in the English language, it might appear as difficult of acquisition as the Chinese. If this be not the case, how is

it, that among so many authors as are continually appearing before the public, so few attain to real excellence of style, after having been conversant with the English language for perhaps twenty or thirty years?

It would appear from hence, that the Chinese language, instead of being the most difficult on earth, will, with proper means of attaining it, be found among those which are most easy of acquisition. Such indeed is the opinion of the writer of this Dissertation; and also, that those means are almost entirely included in a plain and faithful translation of the Imperial Dictionary. Were any one to enquire in what manner the study of the language should be commenced, I would merely advise him to copy the Elementary Characters a few times, and then begin reading the following work, only remembering to trace in every character the elements of which it is composed. This he will soon find an easy and pleasant employ: and, if he pursue it with vigor and exactness, carefully noting the uses and construction of each sentence, a few months will give him a very considerable insight into the nature of the Chinese language, and probably put him in possession of ideas, the obtaining of which, from the writer's having every thing to examine, cost him as many years.

Canton, November, 1810

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